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Shortly before or after puberty she might, following the ceremony, enter without religious rites into sexual liaisons with one or more men of her own or an appropriate higher caste. Similarly, a Nayar man (whether or not he had ever performed the tāli rite) might enter into relationships with any number of women of his own or an appropriate lower Nayar caste.

These marriage customs are further discussed below. Here it is relevant to point only to the role of the *enangan* bridegroom. Since the *enangar* stood to the lineage as formal representatives of the local caste group, it seems appropriate to interpret the tāli rite as a ceremony of group marriage, in which the caste group as a whole married the immature girls of the lineage as a whole.

The tāli rite was indeed both a religious and a legal transaction between the lineage and the *enangu* or neighborhood group. If a girl was discovered to have attained puberty before it had been performed, the assembly forced her property group to expel her and to perform her funeral rites, for she was thought to be ritually dangerous to her caste as a whole. For a woman, the tāli which she wore round her neck until death was therefore a sign that she had been ceremonially and legally accepted as a mature woman of her lineage and caste, "cleared" to bear children to perpetuate both groups.

The lineage similarly operated as a unit, and the *enangar* fulfilled similar roles as formal links with the caste on the occasion of a funeral. All adult males of the lineage who were junior to the deceased attended his cremation, which took place in the southwest corner of the garden of his house. Representative members of all *enangar* households also came to help with practical tasks and to provide ritual objects for the chief mourner's ceremonies, although they were forbidden to touch or to receive food from the mourners throughout their period of pollution. In the fifteen days after the death only the deceased's household, assisted by their special *enangar* households, took part in the collection of the bones and ashes and made offerings to the departed spirit. Other lineage members observed death pollution in their homes and were attended by *enangar* there. On the fifteenth day the lineage reassembled at the house of the dead. After many ceremonies its members were purified by the funeral priest from the pollution of death. On the sixteenth day final offerings were made to the spirit. The deceased's household then held a large feast, which was shared by lineage members and representatives from all houses of the linked lineages. This reception of food by the *enangar* from the hands of the deceased's matrilineal kinsmen marked a

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of matrilineal kinswomen against accusations of incest with a lineage
kinsman or of adultery with a low-caste man. Interestingly, these two
forms of slander still occasion the bitterest inter-lineage disputes in
modern villages. 613
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Third, if a Nayar murdered another of the same rank, his lineage
kin had the customary right to carry the corpse into the courtyard of
the murderer's property group and burn corpse and house together.
The royal and chiefly powers seem to have sanctioned this act as a
form of private vengeance while reserving for themselves the right
of trial and execution of the murderer. 613
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In the law of the kingdom, therefore, the lineage was not recog-
nized as a unit having legal responsibility for its members' acts. The
state vested it with no property and no internal structure of authority.
Its members were not required to accept responsibility for one an-
other's crimes and civil offenses nor were they accorded the right of
unrestricted vengeance. They were merely *permitted* (probably as a
concession to more ancient custom) to support one another in certain
restricted situations, provided they acknowledged the superior au-
thority of the kingdom's judicial agents. 613

I have written of lineages as groups of true matrilineal kin, and
so they often were. However, some procedure seems to have been
found necessary to adjust the lineage system to the territorial or-
ganization. We saw that segments might hive off to other neighbor-
hoods; this must have become more common as sales of landlord and
tenant rights increased during the period of European trade. My in-
formants in one Cochin village told me that traditionally, when a lin-
eage segment moved to a new village, its members were adopted as
retainers and tenants by the local landlord. They were accepted into
the assembly of their new neighborhood and permitted to perform
their first tali rite jointly with some established lineage. Presumably
they also took over the enangar of this lineage. In any case my inform-
ants thought it would be necessary to obtain the sanction of the chief
or, in areas of temple management, of a Brahman legal authority
called a Vaidigan, to obtain new enangar ties within a neighborhood.
The joint performance of the tali rite set up a bond of fictitious matri-
lineal kinship between the old lineage and the incoming segment so
that their members had thenceforth to observe exogamy. 613
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This procedure served to provide newcomers with ceremonial and
marriage partners and to induct them into the microcosmic political
life of the neighborhood. The new members, however, were apparently
never completely accepted as "true" matrilineal kin. Thus death and

613 birth pollutions were not extended to them by their host lineage. In-
182 stead, as we have seen, they continued to observe these rites for sev-
eral generations along with their clansfolk elsewhere.

The information on this procedure is incomplete because it does not take place in modern times. It is not known whether a lineage segment ever became incorporated into a new retainer caste as well as a new neighborhood, although this seems unlikely. It is not known whether an indigenous lineage which shrank to the size of one small property group ever allied itself in putative matrilineal kinship with another established lineage. It is also uncertain whether major segments of a very large lineage might over time break the pollution bond and gradually cease to observe exogamy. Some evidence from a Cochin village suggests that this may have happened. Shortly before my stay a man and woman of two lineages which had the same *en-angar* and had never been known to marry, entered into a traditional type of informal marriage relationship. Elders of the village then began to wonder whether the lineages had not once formed one lineage, either by true matrilineal kinship or by joint performance of the *tāli* rite. As they were unable to foist their doubts on to the junior generation the marriage persisted. Thus, what may once have been an ancient tie of lineage and clan exogamy was quietly broken. I do not know whether fission within a lineage was traditionally possible or whether it occurs only in modern times, when the neighborhood assembly and the lineage itself are both disintegrating.

THE PROPERTY GROUP

613 Structure The property group among Nayar retainers was a seg-
592 ment of the lineage having a time depth of some three to six generations, including the youngest members and the common ancestress. It therefore typically comprised a group of brothers and sisters (real or classificatory), together with the children and daughters' children of the sisters. This group was the joint-property-owning unit. Its members were from birth equal co-parceners in the buildings, land, movables, serfs, and all other property which had come to them from their matrilineal forebears, or had been conferred on them by their feudal lord, or had been acquired by the efforts of individual members. The group's oldest male member (*kāranavan*) was its legal guardian and represented it in the caste assembly.

When spoken of in its own right the property group, like the lineage, was called a *taravād*. When spoken of as a segment of the lineage it was called a *tāvārī* (literally, "mother's line"). *Tāvārī* could also be used of any intermediate segment of the lineage or of a mini-

613 in Malayalam and some became famous poets during the sixteenth
868 and later centuries. A Nayar received his arms from his feudal lord
[212]—a village headman, a district chief, or a prince—at the age of six-
teen. From this time until, perhaps, late middle age, he seems to have
[1702] spent periods of each year away from his village attending military
[1726] exercises in the larger towns or fighting in the continual wars against
the North Malabar chiefdoms, Walluvanad, or Palghat, or between
Cochin and Calicut themselves. Evidently Nayars also spent long pe-
riods in their villages, at least in the monsoon seasons, for they policed
the villages, arranged village festivals, were bailiffs on the landlord's
domain, and paid regular visits to local wives. Nayar youths were also
obliged to attend with their seniors and fulfill ceremonial obligations
• [1782] at the life-crisis rites of the landlord family. The rites were of course
[1739] conducted in a grand manner and served as a focus for the collec-
tion and redistribution of perishable goods throughout the village.

613 Nayar youths also did some cultivation of vegetables and spices in
868 the gardens of their taravāds. Every youth received a rigorous train-
241 ing in cultivation methods, land management, the keeping of accounts,
and the construction of houses, either directly from his kārānavan or,
more usually, from the brothers of his own mother. However, there
was no clear-cut allocation of differential authority and economic roles
among the junior men of a taravād in this area. This was evidently
not necessary because the bulk of the work was done by tenants and
serfs, whose management could be most easily controlled by a single
experienced man. It was enough that a young Nayar should learn *how*
to manage and to cultivate so that he might one day replace his kārāna-
van. Their military duties were obviously the important ones for junior
Nayars. It is unfortunate that we know next to nothing about how they
[201] were organized in the army, or even if they fought in lineage groups
under the leadership of their mothers' brothers. All we know is that they
were for the most part recruited in lineages, with the members of one
lineage serving the same feudal lord.

613 The division of labor between the sexes was less rigid than in most
462 Hindu castes, but was well demarcated in daily life. Girls played with
boys, attended the village school, and even received training in the
[588] gymnasium, until they underwent the tāli rite, usually at about the age
of eleven. After this they were segregated from the men of their lin-
eage and concentrated their time on domestic tasks. For most pur-
poses the group of matrilineally related women formed a single work
unit under the informal authority of the oldest (or oldest competent)
woman. She gave out produce for cooking and allotted to each woman

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had been so essential to its perpetuation, yet so firmly excluded from its everyday affairs.

Within each Nayar house one room was devoted to the spirits of dead karanavans. It contained a number of small wooden stools on which spirits were believed to come and sit. The ancestor shrine of the lineage's oldest house contained many stools placed there in turn for the karanavans of past generations, reaching back to the foundation of the lineage. A newer house would contain only the stools of karanavans of that house. Offerings of cooked food were made before each stool by the living karanavan, in the presence of all members, twice a year. The karanavans' spirits were vindictive rather than protective. They were prone to punish the taravād with sickness or financial loss if any of its members failed in details of ritual performance, in care of the property, or in piety toward matrilineal kin. I have suggested elsewhere (Gough, 1958) that the cult of dead matrilineal forebears served as a focus for aggressive impulses which had their origin in relationships with living matrilineal elders. At the same time it united the living in fear and reverence of the dead and reaffirmed the moral laws of the taravād. It also acted as a sanction against a karanavan's own exploitation of his juniors, since the maintenance of right relations with junior kinsmen formed part of his pious duty to his forebears.

The Splitting of Property Groups Genealogies and property documents reveal that during the nineteenth century the property groups of retainer Nayars divided at a particular point in their development. This occurred when the property group comprised two or more discrete segments descended from sisters, each segment containing an adult male capable of becoming karanavan of his branch. For a segment to be "discrete," its founding ancestress, whether herself living or dead, must not have a mother, brothers, or mother's brothers alive. Separation before this point was not possible because the division of property was stirpital. Individual men, the managers of property, could not separate themselves from their own mothers or sisters. A man could therefore never be a member of a different property group from that of his own mother's mother's brother, mother's brother, or brother. Division could take place only between groups headed by men from different minimal segments (parallel cousins, a man and his classificatory mother's brother, etc.), who were no longer held together by submission to a common mother's brother, grandmother, or great-uncle.

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seven or eight, but he would not inflict heavy punishment unless he was sure of the child's grandmother's and her karanavan's support. After she had undergone the tali rite a man was forbidden to touch any junior woman of his taravād. His relationship with his sister's daughter thereafter became very distant. In accordance with rules associated with incest prohibitions, he might not be alone in a room with her and would scrupulously avoid suspicion of intimacy. He would absent himself when her husband entered the house, remaining on the outer veranda, in the separate men's building, or in the house of his wife. A woman must remain standing and remove her upper clothing when her mother's brother entered her presence. She must not speak first to him, must not laugh in his presence, and must respond with extreme submissiveness to his requests. When possible a man would communicate advice to his sister's daughter through some kinswoman senior to both of them. Thus, except to serve him with food, a woman had little direct intercourse with her mother's brothers.

Modern Nayars admit freely that the partial avoidance between men of the taravād, on the one hand, and that between men and women junior to them in the taravād, on the other, have quite different foundations. The former is a defense against aggression, the latter against desire. Nayars partially avoid their younger sisters and nieces, it is admitted, because otherwise they might be tempted to commit incest with them. As things are, in speaking with others, men often express a respectful tenderness toward their sisters' daughters and a pride in their qualities. Because of the difference of sex, and therefore of ambitions and interests, there is much less potential conflict here than in the relationship with the sister's son. By an orthodox karanavan in particular, its young women are seen as the fine flower of his taravād. Whatever may be his more selfish inner feelings, he expresses gladness when there are many of them to perpetuate his matrilineal group. For their sakes and for the sake of the heirs they may bring him, he welcomes their husbands to his home. When the latter are aristocrats of higher caste, his pride seems the more easily to outweigh any potential hostility toward them.

In orthodox homes today, women's attitudes to their mothers' brothers seem to be variously compounded of fear and admiration. A woman fears her uncle's anger and may resent his harshness toward her brothers and sons. If, however, he manages her household with equity and if his reputation stands high in his neighborhood, he may become a distant hero in her eyes.

595 Leaving aside the problem of origins, however, what I would argue
182 is that the specific form of group marriage evolved among Central
701 Kerala Nayars in the period of the native kingdoms was particularly
[566] adapted to their military organization, which in turn was made possible by the existence of the lower castes of sub-tenants and serfs. The work of the tenants and serfs absolved Nayar men from the duty of maintaining the women and children of either their natal or their conjugal units by their own productive activities. It set free most of these men for a lifetime of military service; in each matrilineal group only one old man was needed at home to organize the work of the household's retainers. Given matrilineal descent and inheritance, and given the mobility of men and the absence of male economic obligations to kinswomen, there was no reason why either men or women should restrict themselves to particular spouses. There was also, as the early European writers realized, a positive value for the kingdom in their not doing so, for plural marriages discouraged soldiers from forming deep attachments to particular wives and children, and encouraged them to focus their loyalty on military leaders and on the matrilineal groups through which they were recruited. At the same time, plural marriages provided the soldiers with ready comforts and a night's lodging both in their own villages and in other villages of the kingdom through which they might pass. Whether or not chiefs regularly enforced indiscriminate mating among Nayar women of their districts in order to strengthen their soldiers' allegiances, a system of group marriage involving optional multiple alliances certainly fitted the way of life of a landed militia, already (for historical reasons) organized into matrilineal descent groups. A close connection between [178] group marriage and the military organization is further suggested in that, after the British had disbanded the armies in about 1800, although matrilineal descent persisted for over a century, group marriage rapidly died out. Within about thirty years monogamous marriage in Central Kerala, and monogamous or restricted, fraternally polyandrous marriage in Travancore, had become common, and fathers had assumed a definite role in the upbringing of their children.

Kinship in the Aristocratic Matrilineal Castes

613 THE LINEAGE

592 Among the retainer Nayars a household whose membership rose above
423 about thirty tended to divide its property between its segments when the senior males who had spanned the segments were dead. Correspondingly, lineages and clans of retainer Nayars went through a grad-

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613 succession to district chiefship and to Kathleen Gough
635 large headships had to be ratified by the king and he could if neces-
622 sary dispossess disaffected branches and exclude them from office.
726 This was true in the heart of the kingdom. Between Calicut and
Cochin, the Zamorins' perpetual enemy, lay several small chiefdoms
ruled by formerly independent Kshattriya lineages owing only a ten-
uous allegiance to one or the other side. In the perennial wars between
Calicut and Cochin disaffected branches of these lineages frequently
changed sides.

622 Village headmen's lineages, again, had their successions confirmed
635 by the chief or king to whom they owed immediate allegiance. When
634 a property group divided into segments, the tendency seems to have
613 been for the branch having the senior member to retain the ancestral
house, the office, and most of the village domain. The king or chief
sometimes installed a discarded branch of such a lineage in a vacant
office elsewhere, if the office-bearing lineage of that village had died
out. His power to do this rested on the fact that an office-bearing
lineage which was dying out could not adopt without the consent of
the officer of next higher rank. Lopped branches of village head-
men's lineages which lost their domains and office seem to have re-
verted in time to the caste rank of retainer Nayars.

613 In most of the royal lineages and many of the chiefly lineages there
554 existed the institution of *sthānams*. These were titles carrying sepa-
rate estates and sometimes subordinate political offices for the men
next in seniority to the ruler, irrespective of branch. The Zamorin's
lineage had five *sthānams*. The first was the Zamorin who had palaces
at Calicut and Ponnani. Second came a *sthāni* (title holder) who ruled
as chief of Nedunganad, a large chiefdom near the southern bound-
ary whose former ruler had been conquered and executed. The third
sthāni regularly patrolled the southern frontier with an army. The
fourth and fifth had no political offices but lived on separate estates.
The rest of the lineage occupied one or more palaces in Calicut. When
a *sthāni* died, those next below him in age rank all moved up one
place. The ruling lineages of Kolattunad, Walluvanad, and Palghat
each had five *sthānis* and many of the lesser chiefs had two or three.
Cochin had no *sthānis* other than the king, but originally the eldest
male of the lineage retired into celibacy while the second ruled as
[648] king. When the Portuguese came they abolished this rule and installed
the king themselves.

● [182] When a ruling lineage was financially and militarily strong, *sthānams*
strengthened its rule and helped it to cohere for a longer time than it
might otherwise have done. They lifted the senior men out of their

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769 Raman Menon, however, records a legend of a mother's brother who deliberately
626 betrayed a nephew, whom he hated, to the vengeance of a lineage currently feuding
613 with his own.⁶ The nephew was to have been killed by his enemies on the following
[173] day. But in the night his mother prayed for the return of her son's elder brother who
was absent in a distant land. The lineage ghosts miraculously brought home the brother
in time to save his junior's life. It must be remembered, moreover, that the belief
that the deceased himself would become a lineage ghost capable of wreaking ven-
geance probably formed a sanction against intralineage murder.

562 Women are excluded from the ancestral shrine during their pollutions and may
[784] not enter it on the day of propitiations. The former prohibition is related to the whole
[827] concept of bad sacredness associated with emissions of the body, which prevents
women from touching or eating with others or entering any sacred place during their
pollutions. That women should be totally excluded from the shrine on days of propi-
tiation seems also to relate to the general position of women in the society. As in most
of the higher Hindu castes, women traditionally played a very minor role in economic
production, for the work of production was done by the lower castes. A few women
were scholars, and a few were even trained in arms, but the Nāyars' occupation as
soldiers in general tended to exclude women from work outside the home. The bearing
of children was by far the chief value of women. Correspondingly, women were
subordinates in the legal sphere. They were throughout life under the legal guardian-
ship of men, might not take part in public deliberations, and might not act as witnesses
in the village court. The legal subordination of women may have been partly connected
with their comparative lack of value in economic production, and perhaps partly,
with the great moral authority they derived from childbearing—for female procreation
was very highly valued and male envy of these functions was overt. The cult of lineage
ghosts supports the correct operation of male legal authority within the *taravād*.
[769] The exclusion of women from participation in it, and their exclusion from the shrine
on days when their procreative functions were most apparent, perhaps expresses in a
formal manner the notion that the power which women derived from these functions
was polar and even antipathetic to the legal and economic power of men.

769 Although the lineage ghosts had only subsidiary judicial functions, their cult
613 served in several ways indirectly to maintain right relationships within the *taravād*.
626 First, a *kāranavan*—who respected and correctly propitiated his own forebears provided
182 a role model of piety for his juniors in their relations with living elders. Second, the
ghosts, as we have seen, provided some sanctions against a *kāranavan*'s ill treatment
769 of his wards. Levy,⁷ in connection with the Chinese ancestor cult, has pointed out
176 the importance of having supernatural agents to whom a human authority owes
182 deference, in social units where the authority is not chosen by his subordinates and
cannot easily be manipulated or removed by them. For the authority's good behavior
toward his subordinates then becomes a part of his sanctioned duty toward his own
supernatural authorities. In the Chinese cult, which in this respect resembles the
Brahman, the head of a family must care for his patrilineal descendants because it is
part of his duty to the ancestors to provide happy and prosperous offspring. For
769 these, by their own later ancestral offerings, will save the forebears' spirits, and his
613 own, from suffering in the life after death. In the Nāyar case, the *kāranavan* must
626 keep his *taravād* in good order because if he does not do so the lineage ghosts may inflict
182 suffering on all, including himself.

Cults of the Dead Among the Nāyars

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Third, the ghost cult obviously provides one explanation for the cause of mis-769
fortunes, and offers a course of action whereby these may supposedly be allayed. 613
Further, the *taravād's* collective responsibility for its misfortunes in a sense makes 182
the ghosts a common threat to its members, for all may suffer from their anger. The
ghost cult thus enhances the sense of unity and common destiny of *taravād* members.

Psychological analysis. The problem of the circumstances under which cults of 769
punitive ancestors arise does not seem to have been solved in culture and personality 171
writing. Freud⁹ derived all forms of fear of, and taboos relating to, the dead, from
ambivalence felt to these kinsfolk during life. Mead¹⁰ in 1930 granted a probable
universality of ambivalence to the dead, but pointed out that whereas Western
Europeans tend to emphasize affection and grief toward the dead and to suppress
hostility, some societies give ceremonial emphasis to the hostility and suppress the
expression of affection and grief. Others appear to permit an equal expression of both
hostility and grief, and Mead thought that personal conflicts relating to the dead
may be almost eliminated when both attitudes find ceremonial expression. She argued
that the choice of which attitude should be uppermost in ceremonial expression was
"a function of the civilization in which the individual lives," but did not at that time
attempt to relate attitudes to the dead to specific types of relationships with the living.

Opler,¹⁰ in an analysis of Chiracahua and Mescalero Apache usages relating to
the dead, has shown that these exhibit mixed feelings of grief and hostility, and has
derived these from ambivalence to living relatives engendered in the matrilineal
extended family. But Opler's analysis, convincing though it is, leaves us again with
the problem that probably all social relations, and especially all kinship relations,
are to some extent ambivalent. Why then do some societies express ambivalence in
mixed attitudes to the dead, others in predominantly hostile attitudes with the
benevolent aspects suppressed, and still others in predominantly benevolent attitudes
with the hostile aspects suppressed? A more intricate analysis of types of ambivalence
is required. Attempts in this direction have been made by a number of recent writers,
notably Kardiner, Fortes, Roheim, Hsu, Mead in later writings, and Whiting and
Child¹¹ in a cross cultural survey of beliefs about evil spirits and demons. Building on
the theories of these writers, I shall try to find meaningful connections between
Nāyar attitudes to lineage ghosts and their attitudes to living matrilineal kinsfolk
of the preceding generation.

Nāyar lineage ghosts are oriented toward the living. Although Nāyars state that 181
good spirits go to a heaven of sensual pleasures and bad spirits to a hell of physical 769
torture, they do not elaborate this belief or refer to it in connection with the cult of [772]
lineage ghosts. They believe that their forebears were sorry to die and are envious
of the living. The forebears retain affection for their lands and houses and continue
to be interested in tangible good things, particularly in food and drink. These attitudes
appear to form part of a general this-worldly attitude among traditional Nāyars. As
a caste, their chief interests have been in land and houses, political power, and military
exploits. They are not ritual specialists. Most Nāyar men and many women were [212]
traditionally literate in Malayālam. Malayālam poems, dramas, and translations [538]
based on the great epics, the *purāṇas* and the *Bhāgavad Gītā*, brought the content of
much Sanskrit literature to them in a comprehensible form. Nevertheless, compara-
tively few Nāyars were philosophers or scholars. Among the great majority, ascetic
practices were oriented chiefly toward averting misfortunes in this life rather than to [785]
accumulating religious merit against the life to come. [782]

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731 crop and cattle blight. These he continued to explain in terms of a childlike picture of powerful supernatural elders.

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783 It must also be noticed that although there are slight differences in the relationships of men and women to lineage ghosts, the ghosts are, in general, far more alike than are matrilineal elders. A man's relation with his mother is very different from that with his mother's brother, and his relations with different mother's brothers are by no means uniform. Yet the ghosts are collectively regarded as both protective and dangerously punitive. It seems probable, therefore, that a Nāyar reprojects his own superego onto the standardized, institutionalized image of lineage ghosts which his culture provides him. For the superego, like the ghosts, is a composite of the prohibitions imposed by a number of elders. The superego is also formed in part from the individual's own aggression, which he defends against by projecting it upon the generalized parental image which he has internalized. If this view is correct, reprojection of the harsh superego onto ghosts in times of misfortune must serve to reduce guilt. For the offences which the ghosts ostensibly punish with sickness are often inadvertent or trivial ones, such as failure in the correct performance of rites. The astrologer's diagnosis may thus permit him to focus his generalized guilt (concerning deeper, unconscious aggressive impulses) upon a specific, minor lapse of duty on the part of himself or one of his kinsmen. He is then able to take practical steps to alleviate his guilt through propitiation of the supernatural agents. The Brahman's offerings on behalf of his ancestors also seem to serve as an alleviation of guilt, but in a different manner. For instead of reprojecting his harsh superego onto ancestral figures, the Brahman apparently projects it wholly outside the area of human relations onto a vindictive god of death, whose hell he believes endangers both his own and his parents' souls. He appears to alleviate his guilt through rites designed to preserve them and himself from this fate.

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182 If it is true that the Nāyar reprojects his own superego upon the lineage ghosts, this would explain why the ghosts are so much more punitive than are living elders. They are thus fitting agents for the infliction of natural misfortunes, which in fact fall more heavily and capriciously than do the punishments of living elders. The fact that all members of the *taravād* are enabled to focus projected aggression and guilt feelings upon the ghosts probably enhances the internal solidarity of the *taravād*, by lifting a portion of these troublesome feelings from inside to outside the group. The cult thus brings together in rites of propitiation these very kinsmen who (in one aspect of their relationship) hate each other, and forges renewed bonds of mutual devotion in the appeasement of beings whom all of them fear.

FUNERALS AND ANNIVERSARIES: THE SANSKRITIC CULTS

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564 Although they retained the non-Sanskritic cults of ghosts, the Nāyars long ago adopted many Brahmanical usages in connection with funerals and with rites on the anniversary of a death. Such usages include cremation rather than burial of the dead, and offerings of rice balls (*balī*), water, and other oblations in the days of pollution following a death. As among Nambūdīri Brahmins, the chief heir, at the end of the period of pollution, enters a period of ascetic mourning (*dhījā*) for one year in Cochin and for forty-one days in Kottayam. At the end of this time he may dispose of the bones and ashes in a sacred river. He makes *balī* offerings to the spirit on each day of his mourning, and at its close, performs final offerings which unite the deceased with

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astrologer, who, however, normally leaves his patient to guess which of his enemies has injured him. Public accusations of witchcraft and sorcery are theoretically not permitted, although Nāyars have been known to take the law into their own hands and inflict beatings on Pānans and Parayans whom they believed to have attacked them through witchcraft. Normally, sickness resulting from possession by a ghost or demon as a result of witchcraft or sorcery is counteracted by exorcism. Local specialists of the castes of washermen, astrologers or umbrellamakers are hired to attend at the patient's house. There they make sacrifices to patron spirits whom they themselves control. Later, they voluntarily become possessed by these spirits and perform frenzied dances in hideous masks before the patient, calling upon the alien malevolent spirit to leave him. The patient usually goes into a hysterical fit, after which the sickness may subside. Exorcism by masked dancing of this kind is known as *kōlam tullal*. Any form of rites or spells to control ghosts or minor deities, whether evil or beneficent, is covered by the general term *mantravādam*.

ANALYSIS

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The analysis of beliefs and practices centering about alien ghosts involves the following questions: 1) Why are alien ghosts appropriate objects of fear? 2) How do these fears fit into the general pattern of Nāyar handling of aggression? 3) What psychic and social functions are fulfilled by the institutions surrounding alien ghosts? The answers to these questions will relate the alien ghost patterns to the functioning of the local community and its subgroups, and to the expressive needs of individuals.

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Alien ghosts as objects of fear. Alien ghosts are individuals who suffered unusual or premature death. People expect them to be especially malevolent. This expectation is based on their presumed envy of the living, and in some instances on the fact that, having found death through violence and hatred, they can be expected to continue to be violent and hateful. Hence they are appropriate targets of fear.

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Alien ghosts are the focus of more violent fears and hatreds than are the ghosts of matrilineal forebears, for they can be even more capricious and wantonly punitive. As we have seen, Nāyars do express a limited amount of aggression against lineage ghosts, and I have suggested that this is because their aggression training is not so strict as to prevent them from acknowledging to themselves some degree of hostility toward living matrilineal elders. Their projected aggression toward lineage ghosts, however, is constrained—like their aggression toward living elders. These ghosts, although punitive, are more protective than alien ghosts.

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Alien ghosts are congenial objects for more violent aggression and fear, precisely because they are alien. They are securely outside the individual's most significant set of personal relations—those of the lineage. Even Brahmans, whose aggression training is so severe that they are unable to acknowledge hostility between themselves and their own ancestral ghosts, express fear and hatred of alien ghosts.

I assume that the fear and hostility which is directed at alien ghosts really has its source elsewhere. My reason for this assumption is that, although the fact that they died unnaturally provides a plausible reason why alien ghosts should be thought of as generally hostile, there is in most cases no ostensible reason in the individual's own personal relationships to alien ghosts which would account for their being chosen as the targets of hatred and fear. Presumably, if we follow psychoanalytic theory, the ultimate sources of these fears lie in familial relationships. This would seem reasonable

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in the Nāyar case, for in spite of the institution of lineage ghosts there are serious limitations on the expression of aggression within the matrilineage. It is therefore logical to hypothesize that a residuum of unexpressed aggression is displaced outside the lineage toward outgroups and toward supernatural agents which represent these groups. However, there are also, as we shall see, realistic reasons, issuing from the political and economic structures, why individuals should feel aggressive toward outgroups of various categories. It seems probable that the institutions surrounding alien ghosts absorb some of these aggressions as well.

Alien ghosts in the general context of Nāyar handling of aggression. The role-structure of alien ghost cults is that of the wider community, and to understand them we must see how they are interwoven with political and economic relationships between lineages and between castes. For political and economic factors limit both the form and the direction which the expression of aggression can legitimately take in these various relationships.

Within the lineage, as I have suggested, the Nāyars' aggression training permits them to acknowledge to themselves a certain degree of hostility in their relations with matrilineal kin. It does not, however, permit physical aggression between matrilineal kin, nor does it permit the expression of projected aggression in the form of accusations of witchcraft or sorcery between matrilineal kin. For the *taravād* is the smallest corporate unit in Nāyar society. Its members are bound by the closest ties of economic cooperation. They must present a united front to the world, and such forms of aggression would be incompatible with the smooth functioning of their group. A degree of aggression can, however, be safely projected outside the *taravād* on to lineage ghosts, whose cult, as we have seen, actually strengthens the solidary bonds between living matrilineal kin.

Turning to wider relationships within the Nāyar caste, we must note that the political organization traditionally permitted the open expression of organized physical aggression against peers outside the lineage, in controlled feuds between lineages of the same village, villages of the same chiefdom, and chiefdoms of the same kingdom, and in warfare between kingdoms. Such physical aggression within the caste was possible because the internal organization of the caste was segmentary. Conflicts within it therefore balanced each other. Lineages opposed each other within the village but combined against other villages. Villages opposed each other within the chiefdom but combined against other chiefdoms. Chiefdoms opposed each other within the kingdom but combined against other kingdoms in war.

In this system, the most severe limits on intersegment conflict were those on feuds within a village. Such feuds arose in response to grave disputes—often, it appears, involving charges against a Nāyar woman of immorality with a low caste man. But, particularly in Cochin, these feuds were of short duration. They were controlled and curtailed by the authority of village headman and district chief. Hence interlineage disputes were limited in their mode of expression. Moreover, it was possible for individuals of different lineages to quarrel, yet to be unable to persuade their *kāranavans* and the rest of their lineages to enter a feud with them. It is here that suspicions of sorcery came into play, chiefly through beliefs in the use of hired sorcerers who controlled alien ghosts. Affines were particularly suspect, for, outside the lineage, affines were the persons with whom one had closest relationships and with whom disputes could most easily arise. If, for example, a *kāranavan* seemed particularly fond of a

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627 wife, his matrilineal juniors were believed to be especially likely to hire sorcerers to
613 harm her. For they would fear that their *kāranavan* might secretly convey to his wife
152 gifts and cash which belonged to his *taravūd*. Yet without their *kāranavan*'s support
754 they would be unable to enter an open group conflict with the *taravūd* of his wife.
182 The belief that affines might practice sorcery, and the existence of ritual remedies
against such attacks, therefore provided for the expression of projected aggression
against persons of other lineages within the caste. I do not know whether Nāyars did,
in fact, hire sorcerers to harm their affines, or merely suspected this of others, but it
seems very probable that they did. If so, sorcery also provided a covert mode for the
expression of direct aggression outside the lineage too. It must be noticed that although,
in the case cited, these hostilities arose as much in the conflict of interests between the
kāranavan and his matrilineal kin as between the *kāranavan*'s wife and her husband's
taravūd, their institutionalized expression was not allowed to disrupt the *taravūd*.
For the *kāranavan*'s matrilineal kin could not practice, and could not be suspected of
practicing, sorcery against the *kāranavan* himself. Instead, members of the *kāranavan*'s
lineage were believed to move (and probably did move) against his wife's lineage
as a group, thus endangering the solidarity of the marriage but indirectly promoting
unity within each lineage.

564 Turning to the relations between castes, it is obvious that as endogamous groups
518 of different rank, occupation and wealth, castes were in many contexts outgroups to
152 each other whose interests were opposed. As landlords and noncultivating tenants,
182 the Brahmans and Nāyars wished to exploit the lower castes for their labor; conversely,
764 the lower castes wished to obtain as much compensation as possible from the higher
castes. In these circumstances there was great realistic potential for hostility between
castes, quite apart from the fact that the internal unity of each caste probably required
the displacement of considerable additional aggression toward outgroups in other
castes. Organized physical aggression between castes was, however, not feasible.
For castes were economically and politically interdependent and linked by hereditary,
interhousehold service ties. The lower castes could not rise up against the higher
castes who employed them and held political power, and the higher castes could not
wantonly harass the lower castes on whom they depended for services. Instead, it
was in the relations between castes that the institutions of witchcraft and sorcery
were most prominent. The general tendency was for the Nāyars to accuse the lower
castes of these evils. This is understandable, for the Nāyars with their wealth and
authority had particular reason to suspect the lower castes of envy and hidden hatred.
This generalized projection of aggression toward the lower castes served to enhance
the internal unity of the Nayar caste. At the same time, the open expression of aggres-
sion against particular low caste persons was institutionally controlled. For the astrologer
did not customarily name his client's enemy, and even if the Nayar had his own sus-
picions, open accusations of witchcraft and sorcery were not permitted.

769 The lower castes were considered peculiarly appropriate propitiants for alien
564 ghosts, and only low caste people could voluntarily undergo possession by them.
787 This suggests that the Nayar fear of direct attack from an alien ghost, like the fear of
152 witchcraft and sorcery, expressed in a disguised manner the Nāyars' projected aggres-
182 sion against the lower castes. The association between lower castes and alien ghosts
[766] was, for Nāyars, indeed appropriate, for both were ritually polluting. Among Nāyars,
the corpses of persons who die violently or from epidemic are unusually polluting and

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their ghosts unusually dangerous. Instead of being burned by their matrilineal kin, the corpses of these persons are buried hastily by men of the washermen's caste—a caste particularly associated with demon propitiation and voluntary ghost possession. The spirits of these victims become alien ghosts. In their anger they may possess and cause injury to persons of any caste in their community. But only the lower castes can induce shamanistic possession by them, and it is chiefly (some say only) the lower castes who can control them to work good or ill. Appropriately, Nāyars believe that low caste witches perform additional rites connected with highly polluting objects and places in order to enhance their evil power. Witches, for example, are believed to procure a magical substance by abstracting the foetus from the body of a pregnant woman and boiling it in a cremation ground, to the accompaniment of spells to a favorite ghost or patron demon.

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There is, however, a qualitative difference between the Nāyar fear of direct attack from an alien ghost and the fear of witchcraft or sorcery. An element of morality enters into the former fear, even though alien ghosts are more wanton and capricious than lineage ghosts. Although they are malevolent and hateful, alien ghosts must, like lineage ghosts, be respected and propitiated, and there is a feeling that they have the right to be as they are. When they are associated with regular cults of the *taravād* and the village, moreover, alien ghosts can also afford some vague measure of protection from misfortune to those Nāyars who conscientiously arrange for their propitiation. It follows, therefore, that the alien ghost attached to a *taravād* or a village temple acts in some measure as a kind of conscience for the Nāyar in his relations with low caste people. For a Nāyar *taravād* which arranges grand festivals for its alien ghosts, lavishing gifts on the low caste officiants who propitiate them and represent them as oracles, is also likely to be a *taravād* which has good relations with its lower caste servants in all contexts of living. In the case of the Nāyar relation to alien ghosts of his *taravād* and his village, as in the case of his relation to lineage ghosts, the concept of reprojection of the superego may therefore be appropriate, as well as that of the simple projection of aggressive id impulses. For while there seems no doubt that the Nāyar projects on to alien ghosts some of the aggression which he has toward the lower castes, just as he projects onto lineage ghosts some of the aggression he feels toward matrilineal elders, these ghosts act also as stern monitors of his conduct in relationships, respectively, with the lower castes and with matrilineal kin.

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The situation is somewhat different with regard to beliefs in witchcraft and sorcery. It is true that a Nāyar who has recently wronged an untouchable or an affine may be one most likely to suspect untouchables or affines of attacks by sorcery. But he does not—at least openly—phrase the attack in terms of justifiable retaliation for his own wrongdoing. Instead, he speaks of some anonymous affine or low caste person who, out of his own envy and wickedness, has used his evil power over a patron ghost in order to harm an innocent person. Nor does the Nāyar respond to the attacks of witches and sorcerers by humble propitiation of the possessing demon. Instead he engages a low caste practitioner of his own to exorcise the demon with the help of a superior ghostly power. Thus, while both the belief in sorcery and the public cults of alien ghosts probably reveal, indirectly, the projection of Nāyar aggression against out-groups, they operate in different social contexts. Witchcraft and sorcery are regarded, by Nāyars who are the recipients of these attacks, as the evil work of envious persons against those more successful than themselves. They are seen as covert substitutes for

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dons his mask and becomes possessed by his *teyyam*, he may adopt an authoritative or aggressive attitude to his Nāyar hosts, demanding gifts or threatening them with misfortune before conferring his blessing. He may not, of course, physically attack the Nāyars. Indeed, he is, while possessed, likely to solicit admiration by inflicting physical suffering on himself, usually by burning himself with torches or rolling in the red hot ashes of a fire. After the oracular pronouncements, having doffed his mask, the officiant again becomes the servant of the *taravād* and humbly accepts his fee. For the low caste officiant, therefore, these festivals permit a limited, stylized expression of aggression and a temporary assumption of authority toward their high caste masters. At the same time, the festivals underline both the need for interdependence between the castes, and ultimately, the lower castes' permanent, secular role as submissive servants.

Functions of the cults of alien ghosts. My discussion of alien ghost institutions in the general context of Nāyar handling of aggression has necessarily pointed to some of their social and psychic functions. These may, it seems, be summarized as follows. First, the cults permitted, in a harmless manner, the handling of aggression which arose in relations between castes. Second, whether or not witchcraft or sorcery were actually practiced, the belief that those whom he wrongfully harassed could arm themselves with these ritual weapons must have acted as a deterrent to the Nāyar authority who was tempted to oppress low caste subordinates, or to favor his affines at the expense of his matrilineal juniors. Through witchcraft and sorcery, alien ghosts, therefore, might help to prevent injustices which could not readily be brought before a secular authority.

Third, these institutions brought together in ritual cooperation the very categories of persons whose mutual ambivalence provided the ultimate motive force for the institutions themselves. In the case of witchcraft and sorcery, there existed a complicated interplay of hostilities and alliances which, over time, balanced each other. All Nāyars feared the harmful supernatural power of the lower castes, and this gave unity to their caste. In a particular instance, however, a Nāyar who believed himself attacked by an individual low caste practitioner, or by another Nāyar with the help of such a practitioner, could obtain relief only by engaging the ritual assistance of some other officiant from one of the suspected castes. In the case of the cults of alien ghosts institutionally attached to his *taravād* and his village temple, it seems that the Nāyar's generalized fear of and hostility to outgroups was turned outside the area of human relations and focussed upon supernatural agents feared by all. But again, only willing and friendly ritual cooperation with lower caste officiants could ward off supernatural attacks from the whole community, including the Nāyars.

It seems probable to me that one of the most important functions of all religious ritual, if not the important, is this resolution of conflict within individuals and within groups. The manner in which this is achieved varies greatly. The rituals of rebellion and the initiation rites analyzed by Gluckman, for example, on the surface bear little resemblance to Nāyar cults of the dead. But as Gluckman has shown, their broad social functions are the same. Institutionalized religious ritual, like the private rites of obsessional neurotics, permits to the individual a disguised expression of his aggression, while at the same time reassuring him that his control over the direct physical expression of aggression is unimpaired. But institutionalized ritual does far more than this. It has not only temporary therapeutic value for the individual, but is also interwoven

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769 with social, legal, and economic institutions in such a way that it resolves recurrent
152 conflicts within them and thus affords them support. For institutionalized ritual
draws into cooperation, in common acts and a common belief system, the very cate-
182 gories of persons upon whose mutual ambivalence the rites are founded. More than
this, by bringing home to the participants a sense of their common helplessness in
face of the dangers and mysteries which confront man both in his own nature and in
his world, ritual appears to transmute their very hatred into sentiments of mutual
dependence and love.

MODERN CHANGES IN CULTS OF THE DEAD

- 178 At the present day the cult of lineage ghosts tends to be retained in its traditional
769 form only in the most traditional households—those having residential and economic
613 norms most closely approximating the traditional pattern, and living in the old style
of ancestral house. In the new houses built in the past twenty years there is no ancestral
shrine, and varying degrees of modification and attrition are observable in ancestral
and death rites in these modern types of household.
- 596 In households comprising an elementary family or a congerie of mixed matrilineal,
cognatic, and affinal kin, the cult of lineage ghosts has died out in its traditional form.
178 In some families emergency propitiations are still made to the ghosts of kinsfolk on
769 the advice of an astrologer. But such a ghost may now be that of any relative who died
782 in the house, and the propitiation may be carried out by any adult male resident.
In one Cochin house, for example, lived an old woman, her elder widowed daughter,
[613] and her children, and her younger daughter, daughter's husband and their children.
The old woman's son, who would traditionally have been *kāranavan*, had taken his
share of property and gone to live with his wife. When the younger daughter's small
girl fell ill with fever, the astrologer advised a propitiation of the ghost of the elder
daughter's husband, who had died in this house and been buried near it three years
previously. The food offering was made by the child's father in a corner of the living
room. In this case neither ghost nor propitiant were members of the *taravād*. Fifty
years ago neither one of them could have been concerned in this *taravād*'s ancestral
rites.
- 613 In some households, regular collective offerings to lineage ghosts are still made in
178 July and October, but the form of the rites has changed. Cooked rice balls are offered
as in *brāddham* instead of the old offerings of cooked food. In Cochin in 1952 there
769 was no prohibition of alcohol. But even so, many modern families despised the old
782 offerings of toddy, meat, and arrack and substituted vegetarian food with coconut
juice, or else performed the Sanskritic rites. Even in traditional *taravāds* whose members
have not yet divided their property, educated *kāranavans* are now often unwilling
to perform the old-fashioned rites. Such was the case in one wealthy *taravād* of a
Kottayam village headman. The *kāranavan*, a university graduate and a politician,
felt that he must maintain the old ceremonies for the sake of his *taravād*'s local reputa-
tion, but would not perform them himself. Instead he persuaded his younger son to
carry out the offerings to the lineage ghosts and the annual cock sacrifice to Bhagavadi.
This youth was, of course, of another *taravād*. Traditionally he would not even have
been permitted to enter his father's ancestral shrine. In many households there are
now no ancestral propitiations, for many now deny to lineage ghosts the power to
bless or harm.

Hair on the arms.—In half the number of subjects it varied from moderate to thick; in the other half it was slight to very slight or (in a few) absent altogether. 142
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Hair on the legs.—In more than half it varied from moderately thick to very thick. One was noted as "like a bear." In one individual only it was noted as very slight.

Colour of the skin.—The darkest (one only) was between 42 and 43 (Broca's colour types). Two others were nearly as dark. The fairest was 44. Two others were nearly as fair. The average is between these extremes.

Colour of the eyes.—The darkest was No. 1 (Broca's colour types). The lightest between 2 and 3. Rather more than half were 2 or shades of 2, generally lighter, while nearly one-half were No. 1.

Ornaments.—As a rule the ordinary earrings are worn. A section of the clan calling themselves Ellenkiria (or Elleng Kiria—tender Kiria?) wear no earrings, though their ears are pierced. Some members of this section told me they never wore earrings, while others said they could wear them as a rule, but they could not wear them when they went to the Kōvilakam (palace) of the Zamorin. 301
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The right nostril of one man was slit vertically as if for insertion of a jewel. His mother miscarried in her first pregnancy, so, according to custom, he, the child of her second pregnancy, had had his nose slit. [304]
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Another wore a silver bangle. He had had a wound on his arm which was long in healing, so made a vow to the God at Tirupati (North Arcot District) that, if his arm was healed, he would give up the bangle at the Tirupati temple. He intended to send the bangle by a messenger, any one going to Tirupati, when his arm was quite healed: then only would he fulfil his vow. If this illustrates how a vow may be fulfilled,—he had not vowed to go himself and give the bangle up, only to give the bangle which was meanwhile convenient as an ornament,—the man's ideas about the God at Tirupati illustrate the confused ideas as to the personality and attributes of the Gods of Modern Hinduism which obtain in Malabar. He thought it was Baghavati whose shrine was the object of pilgrimage to Tirupati, but was not at all sure; indeed he was not sure whether it was a God or a Goddess. It is scarcely necessary to say that the God at Tirupati is a form of Vishnu. [782]
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Other individuals wore ornaments, thus—

(1) Gold ring on ring-finger of the left hand. Ear-rings with red stone. Amulet against the evil eye. [779]

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837 should be no such thing as chastity excepting amongst the Brāhman women. And the Kolatūr Vāriyār, a great personage: "A woman is not forbidden from consorting with more than one man. For the Marumakkatāyam people, who reckon their descent in the female line, there is no objection to any cohabitation which does not contaminate the female element."

581 The opinions which have been quoted are those of persons of the highest position, principals of the oldest families, and give expression to the old-fashioned Malabar custom which they would be the last to condemn. But it must not be imagined that the goddess Lubricity reigns supreme in Malabar. It seems perhaps to have been indicated that she does. Such is, however, not the case. It has been said by one whose long acquaintance with Malabar gives him what we may call admitted right to express authoritative opinion, that, "nowhere else is the marriage tie more jealously guarded, and its breaches more savagely avenged." We shall know more of the subject presently, when we have done with all that pertains to formal union between the sexes. As a matter of fact lubricity has no more followers in Malabar than elsewhere.

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182 The ceremonies surrounding marriage and death seem to be those in which human feelings are deepest, and consequently in these, more than in any others, we see relics of a long gone past; much of the ceremonial being now apparently meaningless, and handed on after the manner of all ceremonial, for no obvious purpose, long after the original signification has been forgotten. Amongst all races of the world it is the same. These form perhaps—for the ceremonies connected with death are interwoven with primitive religious ideas—the closest links between our earlier ancestors and ourselves. The institution marriage itself is not easily liable to change or even modification, and thus it is, perhaps, that it, the product of a bygone age, is not always suited to the wants of the age in which it is found. It is rarely up to date. It is invariably blended with superstitions and restraints which people believe they believe; and the relations between the sexes are rarely natural, *i.e.*, rarely free from restraints which are souvenirs of the past, and which are resented in the present. Of course amongst primitive peoples changes in respect of marital connexions, as also in respect of death ceremonies, are imperceptible. They must be very small indeed in even an immense period; and in their case there is not that

unsuitability to the time in which they exist, which is 585
apparent amongst those societies more liable to change. 764

But whatever the reasons may be, the relations 182
between the sexes in Malabar are unusually happy. The
They seem to be more than commonly natural. The 593
most obvious reason for their being so is that they are
less influenced by considerations of property than else- (421)
where. The desire to maintain property within the
family is the curse of all natural relations between the
sexes. What strange customs has it not put upon
mankind! We have some strange examples of these in
Southern India, as when a woman is married to the door-
post of the house, and the house owner begets children
on her to inherit his property; or when a man marries
his child to a woman, and himself begets children on
her, and the individual who stands in the position of
father may be but a few years older than the son. But
we need not look farther than Europe for anomalous
customs which inhibit the working of the law of natural
selection. Malabar is fairly free from unfortunate
customs, and it is perfectly fair to say the marital
relation amongst the Nâyars is more than commonly
natural.

A description of the ceremonies and formalities 588
connected with the marital connexion will now be
attempted. The first of these, described as "most 121
peculiar, distinctive, and unique," is the Tâli-kettu-
kalyânam. The details of this ceremony vary in
different parts of Malabar, but the ceremony itself, in
some form, is essential, and must be performed for every
Nâyar girl before she attains puberty. Tâli-kettu-
kalyânam means marriage by tying the tâli, or ceremony
of tying the tâli, a small golden ornament, worn on the
neck, the ordinary badge of marriage amongst the Dravi-
dian peoples.

The following account was given by M.R.Ry. 564
K. R. Krishna Menon, retired Sub-Judge, to the Com- 613
mission:—

"The Tâli-kettu-kalyânam is somewhat analogous to what a 588
Dévadâsi (dancing girl attached to pagodas) of other countries
undergoes before she begins her profession. Among royal
families, and those of certain Edaprabhûs, a Kshatriya,—and
among the Chârna sect, a Nedungâdi,—is invited to the girl's
house at an auspicious hour appointed for the purpose, and in
the presence of friends and castemen ties tâli round her neck,
and goes away after receiving a certain fee for his trouble.
Among the other sects, the horoscope of the girl is examined (787)

- 635 was in Calicut,* and it has always been necessary for the new Zamorin to come to this fort in Calicut in a very formal manner. The residences, the kôvilagams of the various branches of the family, lie far to the eastward. The heir to the Zamorinship must make his formal entry into Calicut, for until he does so he is not, strictly speaking, the Zamorin. There is much obscurity as to details of the ceremonial, and I have not been able to note these satisfactorily, so will state merely so much as is undoubtedly correct. The new Zamorin comes to the bank of the Kallai river adjoining Calicut. There he is asked some questions, and he crosses this river in a *boat*—not over the bridge. Arrived on the Calicut side he must partake of some betel-leaf from a Mâppila man dressed as a (Mâppila) woman, or, as some say, from a Mâppila woman† and he says that he assumes the title of Zamorin and rules until his uncle returns. The betel-leaf, received from a (Muhammadan) Mâppila, which he chews, defiles him. He has lost his status in the caste, and he is supposed to be henceforth celibate. It would seem that this old world ceremony is likely to follow the track along which so much of what is interesting in India is disappearing. The late Zamorin never went through it, and he was therefore never, properly speaking, the Zamorin. He held the title perfunctorily, and he was the kârnavan of the immense property of the family; but he could not go "in procession" as Zamorin.‡ There are three unpleasant concomitants to the ceremony. It costs much money. It involves degradation in caste. It compels chastity.
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- 182 The other old custom is not one affecting merely an individual and a few with him, but it is a sexual one, and
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* There is now no sign of it, though the site is known.

† Those who say that a woman gives the betel-leaf say, very reasonably, that a Mâppila man would never for any consideration or purpose wear a woman's garb. But, on the other hand, it is said the person is and must be a man, and that he dresses for this occasion only, as a woman.

‡ The Zamorin was in Calicut but once since he became Zamorin on the occasion of his visit to His Excellency the Governor of Madras in 1896, and then infringed custom by coming to Calicut without previously undergoing the ceremony. Owing to a death in the family he was under pollution and therefore unable to undertake the ceremony at that time, so he came by train. These old-fashioned customs, written or unwritten, take no count of trains. For example, the modern pilgrims from Northern India find the train very convenient when they wish to visit Rameshvaram. The penance of a life is reduced to a few days in a train. What would the old sages say! So the Zamorin came by train. But he could not go "in procession" along the road as Zamorin, and was obliged to make his visit as an ordinary grandee.

therefore one belonging to the community at large—in South Malabar, at any rate. The system of inheritance through females as it obtains amongst the Nâyars, relieves the woman from that undignified position which she occupies throughout the civilized world as the personal chattel of her husband. It gives her a relative superiority, and she carries this elsewhere. *Coitus haud ita fit ut supina mulier viro morem gerat, immo etiam supino viro insidens illa, facie in eum conversa genibusque hic atque illic dispositis negotium illud perficere solet. Hanc veneris figuram feminis ineundiorem, atque idcirco ab iis vindicatam esse perhibent periti.* The well-known *jape* by which Iago hoped to arouse Brabantio into activity would be altogether inapplicable here.

Two more excerpts from Mr. Gopal Panniker's little book will be made, with his permission, descriptive of the other two most important national or popular festivals of Malabar.

"THE VISHU FESTIVAL.

"Vishu, like the Onam and the Thiruvathira Festivals, is a remarkable event amongst us. Its duration is limited to one day. The 1st of Mëtam (some day in April) is the unchangeable day on which it falls. It is practically the Astronomical New Year's Day.* This was one of the periods when in olden days the subjects of ruling princes or authorities in Malabar under whom their lots were cast, were expected to bring their New Year's offerings to such princes. Failure to comply with the said customary and time-consecrated demands was visited with royal displeasure resulting in manifold varieties of oppression. The British Government finding this was a great burden pressing rather heavily upon the people, obtained as far back as 1790, a binding promise from those Native Princes that such exactions of presents from the people should be discontinued thereafter. Consequently it is now shorn of much of its ancient sanctity and splendour. But suggestive survivals of the same are still to be found in the presents (explained further on) which tenants and dependants bring to leading families on the day previous to the Vishu.

"Being thus the commencement of a New Year, native superstition surrounds it with a peculiar solemn importance. It is believed that a man's whole prosperity in life depends upon

* See Madras Museum Bulletin, Vol. III. No. 1, pp. 57 and 58.

FEMALE INITIATION RITES ON THE MALABAR COAST

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with any Nambūdiri Brahman who had the consent of her *āṭṭamāṣa*. Until recently, polyandry and divorce were said by my Nayar informants to have been even commoner than among Nayars.

In the Zamorin's and the Walluvanād lineages the *ṭali* was tied by princes of the more ancient royal lineages of Kodungalur and Beypore. Actual defloration does not seem to have been obligatory in recent times. Kerr's (1811, ch 6) translation of Castaneda, however, states that

... these sisters of the Zamorin, and other kings of Malabar, have handsome allowances to live upon; and, when any of them reaches the age of ten, their kindred send for a young man of the Nayar caste out of the kingdom, and give him presents to induce him to initiate the young virgin; after which he hangs a jewel around her neck, which she wears all the rest of her life as a token that she is now at liberty to dispose of herself to anyone she pleases as long as she lives.

Of the Zamorin's own marriage to a Nayar wife, Hamilton (1797, p. 179), a Scottish trader, wrote in 1793:

When the Zamorin marries, he must not cohabit with his bride till the Nambourie or chief Priest has enjoyed her, and, if he pleases, may have Three Nights of her Company, because the first Fruits of her nuptials must be an holy Oblation to the God she worships; and some of the nobles are so complaisant as to allow the Clergy the same Tribute; but the common people cannot have that Compliment paid to them, but are forced to supply the Priest's place themselves.

Barbosa (Stanley, 1866, p. 194), writing in a more robust age, 1510, says of the Nayar commoners: 'And from that time forward [i.e. after the *ṭali*-rite] the mother goes begging some young men to deflower the girl, for among themselves they hold it an unclean thing and almost a disgrace to deflower women.'

The immediate significance of the *ṭali*-rite for Nayars of this area, taken in conjunction with their combined polyandry and polygyny, is clear. A Nayar *ṭaravād* is perpetuated by its women. Hence the extraordinary value set by Nayars on obtaining a sufficiency of husbands and thus of children for their lineage. The *ṭali*-rite dramatizes this need of the lineage for male sexual partners who ('like breeding bulls', as a Calicut prince remarked) will fulfil the one role denied to men of the lineage in respect of their sisters and nieces. The bridegroom's role as *enagan* was significant in a caste community in which sex relations were promiscuous. In this rite, through a chosen representative, the local caste group as a whole 'married' the lineage as a whole, and ritually set free the procreative powers of its girls to perpetuate their lineage. The ritual 'divorce' on the fourth day freed the girls from their particular bridegrooms, as the fee which accompanied it freed their lineage from further obligations to these men. If he wished to perpetuate the relationship, the ritual bridegroom must come again in a different role, without prior claims, merely as one of a series of lovers. The 'divorce' foreshadows the jealousy with which Nayar men regard the post-puberty lovers of their sisters: these are prevented from interfering in household matters, and may be dismissed by the brothers in a momentary fit of pique. The separation of the *ṭali*-rite (the ritual marriage) from the later *sambandham* unions (initiated without rites) thus underlines the necessity to the lineage of husbands and fathers, while denying to the individual husband and father a legally and socially significant role in relation to his wife and children.

The tying of the *ṭali*, in aristocratic lineages, by a Nambūdiri Brahman or other personage of higher caste in place of an *enagan*, fits in with the custom of hypergamous marriage. The higher caste bridegroom's role gives ceremonial recognition to the overlordship of *nāḍuvāris* over *desavāris*, of kings over *nāḍuvāris*, and in religious matters, of Nambūdiri Brahmans over all. The higher caste lover had no more rights in his mistress than the Nayar and even fewer obligations to her. At the same time the function in the political and economic systems of these high caste men's roles as ritual and physiological husbands and fathers to members of the castes below them must not be underestimated. Today the old political system has

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Nayar
Tiyayar

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[582] Rajas to assist at their ceremonies. Kolattiri women married Koil Tamburan or Nambūdiri men, and Kolattiri men Samantan Nambiar or Nambiar women. In the Kadattunad lineage, which once owed fealty to Kolattiri as an ordinary chiefly lineage, the *tdli* was tied by Kolattiri princes. Women of the lineage married Kolattiri or Nambūdiri men, and men, chiefly women of or village headmen's lineages of their kingdoms.

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182 It is clear that, at least for the 'ordinary' Nambiaris who married almost exclusively with each other, the *tdli*-rite was no more than an initiation ceremony giving the girl the status of a married woman. It is fitting that the *tdli* should not be tied by an *enagar*, for, polyandry being prohibited, the girls of a lineage were not married collectively to the local group as a whole. Since the *sambandham* union was permanent, the husband's sexual rights exclusive, and the father accorded legal, ritual, and social rights, it is difficult to explain this rite in terms of social function. It is true, of course, that like all Nayar rites it had the function of identifying the Nayars as a group with customs distinctive from those of other groups. It may also be possible to argue that it gave ritual recognition to the overlordship of Nambūdiris. It was not, however, as in South Malabar, closely in keeping with the political and economic systems, either in the kingdom or the village. Nambūdiri landlords were few, and many Nayars would have to call for the rite Nambūdiris of distant villages to whom they had no relationship as retainers.

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182 Similarly, the *tdli*-rite in the Kolattiri lineage seems to have resulted less from the lineage's bond to the Koil Tamburans, than the reverse: for, if we are to believe informants, the Koil Tamburans were brought from Travancore expressly to perform the *tdli*-rite and assist at other ceremonies of the Kolattiri lineage. I am not prepared to state that the North Malabar *tdli*-rite had no other social function, since I never saw it and the evidence is incomplete. It seems, however, that certain aspects of the rite, both in north and south, cannot be explained in terms of social function but only in terms of psychological motivations. This I defer until I have discussed the place of this rite in the kinship systems of North and South Malabar Tiyayars.

PART III. THE TIYYAR KINSHIP SYSTEM AND *Tdli*-RITE IN NORTH MALABAR

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613 THE TIYYARS FARM LAND leased on short-term tenures from Nayars and live in the low-caste quarters of the same villages. In this area they are matrilineal. Like Nayars, they were organized into *taras*, the hereditary headman (Tandan) of the *tara* being responsible to the *desavari* for the administration of caste law among Tiyayars and the lower castes.¹

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[582] Each *tara* might contain ten to twelve Tiyyar lineages and one each of Tiyyar washermen (Vannāns, called Mannāns in the south) and barbers (Kāvutiyayans, called Vāthhis in the south). The Tiyyar lineage, like the Nayar, is exogamous, is united by birth and death pollutions, the worship of a lineage goddess, and snake-worship, and is divided into property-groups each containing a sibling group together with the children and maternal grandchildren of the sisters. The Tiyayars, like the Nayars, have dispersed matrilineal exogamous clans. In this area (but not in South Malabar) Tiyyar men may hypergamously marry women of the Tiyyar barber (but not the washerman) caste.

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000 Tiyayars, like Nayars, are predominantly virilocal. Unlike Nayars, Tiyyar men, having little ancestral property, may remain with the father and build a house on land leased from Nayars near the father's dwelling-group. Though filiation is officially matrilineal, and children retain rights in any land or houses their matrilineal group may own, the *local* descent-group, persisting over three to four generations, is therefore often patrilineal. Polyandry is forbidden,

¹ I have no information on the *enagar* institution of North Malabar Tiyayars. Dr. Aliyappan's (1944, *passim*) discussion of the Tiyyar *enagar* system seems, from my knowledge of Tiyayars, to apply only to patrilineal Tiyayars of South Malabar. In Kottayam informants did not remember the institution which, if it existed, must have died out thirty to fifty years ago.

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Tiyyar

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This partial avoidance between a woman and her older natal kinsmen begins after the *elli-rite*, when she receives the title *amma* (lit. 'mother'). In the rite, it seems, the girl is fictitiously made mature by the mock menstrual seclusion - before she is in danger of actually becoming mature; her sexuality is then given away by her natal kinsmen to a vicarious husband outside her lineage. For this is the one right in her forbidden to her natal kinsmen; the rest - her domestic services and procreative power - remain theirs throughout her life. Even among North Malabar Nayars and Tiyyars, with their virilocal residence, the brother may call home his sister and her children and require her to divorce her husband. He must, moreover, maintain her if she is divorced, and her children have the right to return to the mother's brother's house as his heirs.

The unconscious desire for adelphic incest in these matrilineal castes appears in other rites. I have mentioned the rites performed by the brother of a girl at her first menstruation among South Malabar Nayars and North Malabar Tiyyars. Later, when the South Malabar Nayar woman was in the fifth or seventh month of her pregnancy, she was formerly seated before her brother who poured tamarind juice into her mouth from the point of the *taravadd's* ancestral sword. It was believed that he thus conveyed strength (*sakthi*, a generalized form of energy believed to reside *par excellence* in semen) and also martial valour, into the body of the first-born child. This seems a clear instance of the brother's unconscious wish to impregnate his sister himself, as well as an explicit recognition that, in matriliney, the mother's brother has the rights of a *pater* in the child.

Among South Malabar Tiyyars the tamarind-juice is given by the pregnant woman's brother to her husband, and by the husband's sister to his wife. This rite is more in keeping with a patrilineal system in which the husband has primary procreative rights in his wife. At the same time, it seems likely that the rite reflects the brother's unconscious desire to pass his 'strength' to his sister and her child, through the husband, and the sister's desire to contribute to the making of the child, and thus usurp the role of her brother's wife. The rite is beautifully in keeping with double unilineal descent, in which brothers and sisters retain strong interest and rights in each others' offspring.

The unconscious fear, and underlying it, an unconscious desire, of women for sexual attack from a male parental figure (the father in this case) probably appears also in the South Malabar Tiyyar rites which precede the tamarind-drinking. These are to drive out evil spirits who may attack the child in the womb. The woman sits at night before a group of washermen (Mannans) who invoke the spirit in song, and perform devil-dancing in weird masks. By morning, the more susceptible of the women present, overcome by the spirit, may go into fits. Finally a live cock is held against the woman's forehead, and rice thrown over her head. If she has a fit, the cock is beheaded and its blood offered to the evil spirit. The rites are paid for by the woman's father. In view of what is known of the beliefs concerning incubi in western societies (Jones 1931, ch. 3), it seems probable that these rites issue from the unconscious female fear of being attacked sexually by the father, and the recognition of the father's unconscious desire to kill the child in his daughter's womb. The Mannan devil-dancers (who sometimes consciously impersonate the dead ancestors of a propitiating Tiyyar lineage) may be interpreted to represent the woman's lineage forbears and thus, collectively, her father.¹

Again, in all the groups studied the *taravadd* is believed to be guarded by a group of snake-

¹ This interpretation is practically certain in view of the almost identical ceremony carried out one year after the death of a South Malabar Tiyyar. It is believed that before this the spirit is earth-bound and cannot be invoked to pass to heaven. On the night fixed, small girls of the *taravadd* sit before Mannan and Panan devil-dancers who, as in the pregnancy ceremonies, wear weird masks and sing to invoke the spirit. Late at night one of the girls may become possessed by it and talk like the deceased, and give commands to the family about its future conduct. After this ceremony the spirit is freed from its bonds to the earth (see Thurston and Rangachari 1909, VII, p. 91). Since the possession of the girl by an ancestral spirit here is of the same kind as in the pregnancy rites and both types of spirit are called *prodam*, there seems little doubt that the evil spirit who attacks is also ancestral and thus an *avur*.

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613 Again in all the groups studied The

796 ⁶⁶ taravā is believed to be guarded by a group of snake-
564 gods (naga) who reside in the small grove in the south-east corner of the ancestral gardens.
182 If they are offended, the snakes inflict the taravā with barrenness among women, disease, and
184 child-deaths. They are propitiated by the low caste of Pulluvar. A Pulluvar and his wife
782 come to the Nayar or Tiyar grove and draw figures of the serpents in green, red, yellow, and
787 black. They sing songs of entreaty to the snakes, and play on a musical instrument, while one
or more women of the propitiating taravā, who have observed sexual continence and food
taboos for several days previously, dance round the figures with hair streaming. The snakes
then 'enter the bodies' of these women, who behave in a dissociated manner and speak with
the voice of the poisoning snake-spirit, announcing to taravā members the kind of propitiation
necessary to overcome their wrath. Since they are the guardians of the taravā, are jealous
of the marital sexuality of women born into it, can inflict them with barrenness, and periodically
'enter into' them, it seems likely that these totemic snakes are unconsciously regarded as
phallic symbols of the taravā's male forbears (whether matrilineal or patrilineal). Their
'possession' of the women would thus reflect the incestuous desires of women towards men
of the parental generation in the taravā, and secondarily towards their brothers.

593 I have discussed in general terms the probable existence of unconscious incestuous
182 desires between the individual and members of the parental generation and, as an extension
of this, between siblings. We must now face the problem of whether, in the matrilineal castes,
a regular Oedipus complex exists: that is, of whether a man unconsciously wishes to kill his
father and appropriate his mother, and whether a girl harbours murderous wishes towards
her mother and incestuous ones towards her father.¹

593 There seems little doubt that in the matrilineal as in the patrilineal castes, a 'normal'
604 Oedipus complex must develop in early infancy. Even among South Malabar Nayars the
182 physiological function of the male in procreation is clearly acknowledged, and a child is
expected to resemble its father as well as its matrilineal kin. The Nayar infant must, more-
over, be aware of the marital relationship between its parents, since it commonly sleeps in the
mother's room until the age of about four or until the next sibling is born. At about the age of
five to six, however, a change takes place in the relationship between a South Malabar Nayar
child and its parental generation, and thus, we may suppose, in its unconscious attitudes to
these figures. A boy now comes under the discipline of his mother's brothers, and a relation-
ship of reverence with underlying hostility begins to be formed. A girl becomes aware that
her mother's brothers are her ultimate guardians and, though she may still approach them
freely, she must submit to them. The father drops into the background. In a traditional house-
hold, whereas he might play with them freely as babies, he may not now interfere in the
upbringing of his children. Even today, he may be already divorced and replaced by another
husband: in Palakkara sixteen out of seventy Nayar sibling groups containing children under
the age of fifteen had no contact with the *genitor* or his kin. The mother's brother thus takes
over a great part of the role of *pater*. The relationship admits, however, greater conscious
hostility than does the patrilineal father-child relationship. Despite the reverence demanded
in public, Nayar men sometimes remark privately that they harbour murderous feeling to-
wards their *kānanaran*: several have in fact killed him. Such conscious hostility to the father
would be almost unheard of in a high patrilineal caste. The partial avoidance required between
a man and his sister's son, and the extreme formality of their behaviour, reflect this under-
lying hostility. The relationship with the elder brother is, in etiquette, modelled on that

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¹ My data, as far as Malabar matriliney is concerned, contradict Malinowski's (1916) theory that the Oedipus complex is absent from the start in matrilineal societies and is replaced by the wish to marry the sister and kill the maternal uncle. They confirm Ernest Jones's (1924) conclusion that a normal Oedipus complex exists in matrilineal as in patrilineal societies, but that in matriliney repressed incestuous desire for the mother is extended to an unusual degree to the sister, and much unconscious hostility to the father deflected towards the mother's brother. Rohrer's (1950, ch. 3) refutation of Malinowski's view and his analysis of the Oedipus complex of Neumann Island are also relevant.

Nayar
Tiyar

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with the mother's brother; emotionally, hostility is more repressed and greater loyalty demanded. Both avuncular and fraternal relationships pivot on the bond of men to their mothers and sisters: common devotion to these women places the men in a position of equivalence rather than of unity, emphasizes loyalty to the *taradd* rather than interpersonal amity, and points up the rivalry between them.

The suppressed hostility of a boy towards his father with reference to the mother becomes, therefore, among South Malabar Nayers transferred to the mother's brother at the age of four to six. The completeness of this transference appears in death rites. The younger brother or sister's son of a dead man performs his funeral rites, observes pollution for fifteen days, and, if he is the immediate heir, mourning and sexual abstinence for six months to one year. He thenceforth annually offers cooked food to the spirit, which is represented in the form of a terrible and vengeful animal (*predham*, the same word as for the hairy spirits who attack menstruous women). No mourning, pollution, or propitiations were traditionally observed for the *genitor*, about whose spirit no beliefs are held. The observance of pollution (without rites) for the mother's *idli-tier* was the sole acknowledgment of its fathers' roles in the *taradd*'s perpetuation. The son's unconscious desires remain primarily fixed upon his mother, as appears in his paramount devotion to her in social life and to Bhagavadi in religion. They appear to be secondarily directed to the younger sister and sister's daughter, hence the avoidance and extreme formality demanded in the relationship with them. The rites of first menstruation and pregnancy and the institution of the serpent-gods seem to indicate that unconsciously the mother's brothers and other matrilineal forbears are regarded as *genitores* as well as *patres* and the elder brother as the symbolic spouse of a woman as well as her natural guardian.

Among North Malabar Nayers and Tiyars, with their virilocal residence, the transference of hostile wishes on the part of the male, and incestuous wishes on the part of the female, from the father to the mother's brother, is less completely carried out. The father is often known throughout his life, when he shares with the mother's brother the role of *pater*. Since legal rights are concentrated with him, the relationship to the mother's brother tends to be more hostile, that to the father, more affectionate. But individual circumstances modify these relationships: a man may align himself alternately with mother's brother and with father according to the financial support each offers him. Death-pollution is observed for both and the vengeful spirits of both are propitiated. As in South Malabar, the primary emotional relationship is always with the mother and the secondary one with the sister, to whose claims those of the wife are subordinated. The etiquette of avoidance and restraint towards the sister and sisters' daughters is identical in north and south. A girl regards her father with greater reverence as her natural guardian, but her behaviour is more stereotyped than among South Malabar Nayers and corresponds more closely with that to the mother's brother. Father-daughter incest is regarded with greater horror than in the south, from which we may surmise that unconscious incestuous desires remain stronger.

On the surface, the South Malabar Tiyar system with its double unilineal descent and emphasis on the unity of the patrilineal extended family forms a contrast to these matrilineal systems. The father or rather, traditionally, the eldest of the fraternal group of fathers, is head of the family. Sons are brought up under the discipline of all their fathers whom they are expected to regard with equal deference and love. A more regular Oedipus complex appears to develop in this caste. From the age of five to six, a boy must observe reverence to his fathers comparable to that of a Nayar boy to his mother's brothers. He addresses them with deference, and avoids them out of respect. Like a Nayar boy, he is dismissed from intimate contact with the mother about this age, as also with the sisters: they in turn, as he grows older, treat him with deference. The unconscious hostility of the son to his fathers appears in beliefs about

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184 68 The UNCONSCIOUS E. KATHLEEN GOUGH
 182 hostility of the son to his father appears in beliefs about
 593 the spirits of dead *Adamasas* of the patrilineal group, which, like Nayar *Adamasas* spirits,
 775 are predatory and dangerous beasts to be propitiated with fear. Hostility to the father is
 595 however in his lifetime more deeply suppressed than to the Nayar mother's brother, as is
 male sibling rivalry. Among Nayars, an attempt is made to mitigate the divergent interests
 of married brothers by reducing to a minimum the claims of their wives and children. Their
 mutual jealousy is also acknowledged in the prohibition against brothers having sex-relation
 with the same woman. Among Tiyyars unity of marital interests is ensured by obliging brothers
 to share a wife. This enforced unity of brothers is the most striking feature of the Tiyyar
 system and that which contrasts most strongly with the matrilineal castes.

182 Also among Tiyyars the father-daughter relationship resembles that of the Nayar to his
 184 sister's daughter. After she is five to six, a girl's father sternly disciplines her; with the onset
 593 of puberty an etiquette of partial avoidance is imposed. The 'possession' of women by serpent-
 gods of their natal *taradd*, and the exorcism of demons during pregnancy lead me to suspect
 that unconscious incestuous wishes towards the father are perpetuated in women as they are
 towards the mother's brothers (whose images are the serpent gods of the matrilineage) among
 Nayars and matrilineal Tiyyars.

593 The Tiyyar system is not, however, a 'regular' patrilineal one. We may suspect this from
 182 the existence of matrilineal clans. First, the father's power is not absolute: he shares it with
 613 his brothers. Second, the harmony between brothers is, as among Nayars, maintained primarily
 184 through their dependence on the mother. Among Nayars men neglect their wives and children
 606 for the sake of *taradd* and mother. Among Tiyyars they forgo sexual satisfaction for the sake
 of the mother and domestic harmony: the mother controls the wife's actions and dictates
 the turns by which her sons may sleep with their common wife. This dependence on the
 mother is reflected, as among Nayars, in devotion to Bhagavadi.

593 Third, the Tiyyar system resembles the Nayar in the strength of brother-sister ties.
 182 The Tiyyar father early surrenders part of the guardianship of his daughters to his sons.
 184 This appears at the *tdli*-rite where the father hands his daughter to the mock bridegroom,
 who returns her at the 'divorce' to her brother. The relationship between a mature but un-
 married girl and her brother is, as among Nayars, one of discipline, restraint and partial
 avoidance. After her marriage and departure to the husband's house, the restraint between
 a Tiyyar woman and her brother is somewhat relaxed. Should she be divorced or widowed,
 however, she is returned to her brother.

The disciplinary role of the brother is reflected in the relationship to the mother's brother.
 He is not, as in many patrilineal systems, an intimate with whom joking and licence are per-
 mitted. He is rather a potential father-substitute, and may in fact become one if his sister
 is divorced or widowed. At his death his sisters' children observe pollution as for a patrilineal
 kinsmen and, after the deceased's sons but before his younger brothers, make offerings to the
 spirit. In life his claim as a potential father-in-law resembles that of the Nayar or Tiyyar
 mother's brother in North Malabar.

595 Fraternal polyandry strengthens the claims of maternal kin, as it does the ties between
 182 a woman and her natal family. For in the traditional family, with a single common wife, there
 593 is only one set of maternal kinsfolk for all the children of brothers. Even if a second wife were
 taken, sororal polygyny or the sororate might perpetuate this situation. Again, it is clear
 that with fraternal polyandry many Tiyyar women must have remained unmarried and under
 the permanent guardianship of their brothers. The uncertain prospect of marriage for a
 woman gives us a further clue to the meaning of the *tdli*-rite.

588 Having clarified the relationship of women to their natal kinsmen, we can state more
 593 clearly the probable unconscious motives for the *tdli*-rite. In all the groups her natal kins-
 182 men retained strong though varying rights in a woman throughout her life. In all, the bond

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between mother and son was the most cherished relationship, while that between brother and sister came second in emotional strength. In all the exogamy of the unilineal group was sternly enjoined, and there was horror of adelphic incest. There was, however, evidently temptation towards it, since women remained under the partial guardianship of their brothers and might (invariably among South Malabar Nayars, occasionally in the other groups) live in the same house with them.

It is a commonplace in Hinduism that a woman is never independent: throughout her life she is under the guardianship of one or more men. At her birth all rights in a woman are vested in the men of her property-group, among Nayars and Tiyyars the *Adranacan* and under him other males of the group, whether matrilineal or patrilineal. These rights include the right to discipline her and, as she becomes old enough, to command her domestic services; they are counterbalanced by the obligation to feed her and protect her from harm. At puberty two new sets of rights are acquired by whoever is her guardian, in her sexuality and in the children she may bear. In the matrilineal castes the *ius in gentricem* is retained by the matrilineal kinsmen. Among South Malabar Tiyyars it is given to a group of brothers of another patrilineal lineage at the post-puberty marriage rite. In all these castes there is, however, uncertainty about the *ius in uxorem*, since the girl is not, as in a patrilineal Tamil caste, given over to the guardianship of one particular husband for the duration of her life. First, all the castes permit divorce and reversion to the brothers' house. Second, among Nayars, though a woman might have several husbands traditionally, she might conceivably have none, if she was divorced or failed to compete with other women. Among South Malabar Tiyyars, because of fraternal polyandry, many women must have remained unmarried. The *Idli*-rite, therefore, appears in one aspect as half a marriage, a ceremony made necessary by the strong incest-taboo in these groups and the uncertain nature of post-puberty marriage. In it the men of her natal group ceremonially give away the sexual rights in a girl. That the bridegroom does not receive permanent rights in his bride, but forsakes her on the fourth morning, points up the negative character of this marriage, as a renunciation of rights by the men of one group without the corresponding acceptance of them by members of another.

In all the groups certain ritual acts emphasize this reluctant renunciation by the woman's natal kinsmen. In the matrilineal castes one of her brothers, or her *Adranacan*, carries each girl into the marriage shed, bears her round, and seats her on the plank. This act is significant because after the *Idli*-rite a girl may not be touched by mature men of her lineage: taboos associated with incest prohibitions come into force from this date. Among South Malabar Tiyyars, again, the mother's brother, who after the father has secondary rights of guardianship and who, through matrilineal clan exogamy, is also concerned in the etiquette of incest-taboos, carries the girl to her seat. In the matrilineal castes, the girl's *Adranacan* asks the astrologer if the auspicious time has come, and signals for the *Idli* to be tied. Among South Malabar Tiyyars, as might be expected, the father officiates here. Among South Malabar Nayars, brothers of the girls first welcome the bridegrooms, wash their feet, and receive gifts of clothing in return. The underlying sexual hostility of the lineage's men to these necessary intruders appears on the fourth morning, when boys of the host lineage pelt the bridegrooms with plantain-fruits (recognized as phallic symbols by Nayars) as they enter the house to eat the ceremonial meal with their brides. Among Nayars and South Malabar Tiyyars, the *Adranacan*'s gifts to the bridegrooms when they depart after the 'divorce' signify his gratitude for their act of ceremonially releasing the procreative powers of his lineage's women, while at the same time dismissing them.

We note now that the *Idli* is seldom tied by the man with whom the girl will later cohabit as her husband. Among South Malabar Nayars the *enagan* might, after the 'divorce', approach her again as lover. But his status as ritual bridegroom gave him no prior claims: as the girl's

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sambandham lover he came in a different role. Among South Malabar Tiyyars the prospective husband might tie the *Mli*. But in this case, too, his roles were kept separate: the post-puberty marriage rite must be gone through if the bridegroom (with his brothers) became permanently married to the girl. In any case the ritual bridegroom was usually a small boy; this is the important point here. Among North Malabar Tiyyars a potential mother-in-law tied the *Mli*, or else the barber woman, though in this ceremony the barber is protagonist in the rites marking the girl's passage to womanhood. In the higher matrilineal castes, and among North Malabar Tiyyar barbers, the rite is performed by an elder of high rank. Among North Malabar Nayars, however, the lower caste Marar drummers (who, like the barber for Tiyyars, conduct Nayar funeral rites) play a role suspiciously like secondary bridegrooms, since they place ornaments on the girl's arms and address her for the first time as a married woman, before the *Mli* is tied.

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My hypothesis is that in all these cases the choice of *Mli*-ties indicates, on the part of men of the society, a general, unconscious fear of deflowering women. Barbosa (Stanley tr. 1866, p. 7) gives us a clue to this when he says that even after the *Mli*-rite, Nayar mothers went 'begging some young men to deflower the girl, for among themselves they hold it an unclean thing and almost a disgrace to deflower women'. Castelnada (Kerr ed. 1911), similarly reports that in the Zamorin's family the girl's kindred 'send for a young man of the Nayar caste out of the kingdom, and give him presents to induce him to initiate the young virgin, after which he hangs a jewel round her neck. . .'. Even for the Zamorin's sisters, therefore, the 'initiator's' role was unpopular: he must be induced with gifts to fulfil it. Hamilton (1727, p. 174) notes that the 'Nambourie or chief priest' must deflower the Zamorin's Nayar mistress (presumably at the *Mli*-rite) before the Zamorin could cohabit with her, and that 'some of the Nobles are so complaisant as to allow the Clergy the same Tribute'. That the Nambûdiris' privilege was not one exacted under protest from the Nayars, but willingly accorded, appears from his remark that 'the common people cannot have that compliment paid to them, but are forced to supply the Priest's place themselves'.

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The unwillingness to deflower a woman is explained on the grounds that it is a 'disgrace' and an 'unclean thing'. Here, evidently, is the clue to why the North Malabar Tiyyar *Idli* was tied by a barber woman, and the rites symbolizing defloration, or perhaps conferring fertility on the woman, performed by a barber man. Tiyyar barbers, like their washermen, pollute Tiyyars and may not ordinarily touch them. Both castes attend at the real first menstruation of a North Malabar Tiyyar girl, where the barber man and barber woman perform ceremonies similar to those of the mock menstrual seclusion before the *Idli*-rite. The Tiyyar washerwoman must at all times supply the girl with a lower cloth (*matu*, 'change') in which to bathe on the fourth morning of menstruation. She supplies this cloth also for the bath after the mock seclusion before the *Idli*-rite. At the real puberty-rites, however, it is the headman of the washerman caste, and not a woman, who hands the clean loin-cloth on the third night to kinswomen of the girl, after singing a song designed to enhance her fertility.

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The role of the washerman as a man associated with the fertility of women appears again in the first menstruation ceremony of South Malabar Nayars. Though the Nayar washerman washes ordinary cloths for Nayars, the lower caste, Tiyyar washermen (*Mannan*) provides the clean loin-cloth for bathing after menstruation and child-birth. At the Nayar puberty-rites, after the ceremonial bath on the fourth morning, the eldest washerman stands on the verandah and instructs the girl, who sits before him within the house, to make an offering with rice and coconuts to the sacred household lamp. While the natal kinsmen of the girl hide themselves on the back verandah (a place usually occupied by women) a group of washermen assemble on the front verandah and sing vulgar songs relating to sexual intercourse before the girl and her kinswomen, with a view to enhancing her fertility. At the end, her mother pays the head washerman the cloth which the girl has worn to cover her head and face.

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pays the head washerman the cloth which the girl has worn to cover her head and face.

It seems that in this offering to the household lamp (as in the Tiyar girl's offering to the lamp and the marriage-pole in North Malabar, when she is instructed by the barber) the washerman stands as a kind of bridegroom to the girl, as he does also by singing songs to increase her fertility (see Freud 1919, ch. 3; Radcliffe-Brown 1939).¹ In some areas of North Malabar the barber, too, sings songs at the *tdli*-rite to increase the fertility of the girl, but I do not know whether these are obscene. In any case, both barber and washermen stand in a special relation of intimacy to the girl during and immediately after her first menstrual pollution, and the barber has the same role during the mock menstrual seclusion before the *tdli*-rite and at the rites representing ceremonial defloration which follow this seclusion.

Why, if it is in some circumstances a ritually polluting act, worthy of a low caste man, symbolically to deflower a woman, do the Nayar and Kshatriyas call holy men of higher caste, and the North Malabar Tiyar barbers, a respected elder of their community, to tie a woman's *tdli*? This becomes intelligible when we remember that ritual purity and pollution are the positive and negative aspects of a condition best described as *sacer*, supernaturally dangerous or valuable, the reverse of the profane.² In South India, a host of situations illustrate this dual nature of the 'sacred' as potentially polluting or potentially unusually pure. Thus faeces and urine are normally ritually polluting, yet the dung and urine of the sacred cow (a mother symbol) are eaten or sprinkled to purify oneself of the pollutions of death, of birth or of sin. The virgin, then, in these castes is sacred: it is ritually dangerous to take her virginity. My hypothesis is that this is so because the virgin is unconsciously associated with the mother, as a woman whom it is desirable to approach sexually but who may not be approached, because of the threat of castration or murder by a male parental figure (originally the father and, in the matrilineal castes, the mother's brother). I think that this is so because the virgin is still in the possession of her own jealous natal kinsmen, who own, though they may not use, her sexuality. She is, therefore, feared by men of her own age-group, who feel that it is the place of some father-figure (unconsciously, their own father or mother's brother) to take her virginity. A father-figure common to the whole society is therefore summoned, symbolically (and sometimes actually) to deflower the girl, release her, in respect of her sexuality, from the ownership of her natal kinsmen, and leave her, divorced on the fourth day, as a normal mature woman who 'may now do what she pleases'.

In the higher matrilineal castes the bridegroom has all the attributes of a father to the Nayar community. When the *desavar* ties the *tdli*, he is a father-figure to the village as a whole: in some villages he even has the title of *acchan* ('father'). The *nddavar* is a father-surrogate to the *desavar*, and the king, to the *nddavar*. The Nambudiris are 'fathers' to the whole Nayar and Kshatriya community, being the greatest landowners, the highest in ritual

¹ This impression of the washerman as symbolic bridegroom was strengthened by an incident in Palakkad. Five years previously, a Nayar girl of eleven in a family of newcomers had menstruated before her *tdli* was tied. Fearing neighbourly disapproval, her mother called the low caste washerman (Mannan) to the house and paid him to tie the girl's *tdli*, on the third day while she was still in menstrual pollution. He then brought the lion-cloth for the ceremonial bathing as usual on the fourth day, and performed the normal ceremonies, which were attended without unfavourable comment by other Nayars of the village. The girl's elder sister explained that, having failed to obtain a Nayar 'bridegroom' before the menstruation, or to tie the *tdli* herself before a temple god, the mother acted correctly in calling the washerman during pollution, thus saving her daughter from the danger of castration by the caste.

² The employment of a kinswoman of the bridegroom to perform all or part of the marriage rites on his behalf is common in the 'real' marriage ceremonies of many Hindu castes. A Tamil Brahman bridegroom only half ties his wife's *tdli*; his sister stands behind the girl to tie the second half of the knot. Among Travancore Tiyars, the bridegroom's sisters and mother go to the bride's house without him for the real post-puberty marriage, where the sister recites the formulae on his behalf and later brings home the bride. Sociologically, the part played by a man's kinswoman in his marriage reflects, no doubt, their own interest in the marriage and rights in the bride. But in all the instances we may, from a psychological point of view, interpret the bridegroom's withdrawal in favour of a kinswoman as evidence of his fear to marry, a fear originally engendered by his (filial) wishes and dread of paternal vengeance. Alternatively, the bridegroom's unconscious fear of his elder kinsmen's vengeance may be got over in the reverse manner by requiring these elders to absent themselves from the marriage-rite, as in the *sandhanam* ceremonies of North Malabar Nayars.

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rank, above the political system of the kingdom, and, in religious belief, the representatives of God on earth. All of these father-figures are collectively physiological fathers of the Nayers, so that in summoning them to deflower their women the Nayers call in real or classificatory fathers as well. When the bridegroom is a higher caste man, moreover (as when Tiyyar barbers call an elder of their caste), his venerable age leaves no doubt of his paternal role.

That the ritual bridegroom should be a father-figure to the community explains my informants' memory that the Asan might deflower Nayar women, but might prefer to forgo his right for money paid by some other bridegroom. It explains why the *desavari* must be present to give permission for the Nayar rite (and the Tandan for the Tiyyar rite) and receive money 'as if to recompense him'. The preliminary gifts by the high-caste Nayar girl's family to Nambūdiri landlords, the *addurari* and the Maharaja also bear out this hypothesis.

Among South Malabar retainer-Nayers and among Tiyyars a high-caste father-surrogate could not be obtained, so that 'they must perforce supply the priest's place themselves'. The retainer-Nayers get round this by selecting an *nngan* to represent the whole caste, who was deputed for the task by village elders and, supernaturally, by the position of the stars at his birth. Even so, the hazardous nature of the rite is indicated by the need to perform it at an auspicious time, when the astrologer (in some respects another father-figure since, though of lower caste, he was traditionally the trainer of Nayar boys in their village gymnasium, and a priest of Bhagavadi) gave the word.

Among North Malabar Tiyyars the mother's brother's wife or the father's sister might tie the *tdli*. She does this on behalf of her son, who is the proper husband for the girl, and before the marriage-pole and the sacred household lamp (divine phallic symbols). In this caste it is fitting that some kinsman or kinswoman of the bridegroom should perform the rite, because Tiyyars are not polyandrous and a girl becomes temporarily incorporated at marriage into her husband's dwelling group. Yet, if we assume the Oedipal fear, the Tiyyar bridegroom could not tie the *tdli* himself, since he is (ideally and often) a cross-cousin. If he is the mother's brother's son, he takes the girl, in this group where paternal claims offset matrilineal, from her *kāranan* and his own father, a terrifying situation in view of his unconscious Oedipal fears. If he is the father's nephew, he takes her from her father and his own *kāranan*, an equally dangerous situation. The problem is surmounted by permitting the mother's brother's wife or the father's sister of the girl to 'marry' her on behalf of her son.

The substitution of the barber-woman to tie the *tdli*, and the role of the barber as one intimately associated with the girl's passage to womanhood, may perhaps be understood by considering the general role of barbers in Tiyyar social life. The barbers cut hair for Tiyyars, and in South Malabar though not commonly in the north, their women are midwives. They rank parallel to the Tiyyar washerman with whom they are compared, since both castes have polluting occupations but take part in the rites of birth, girls' puberty, and death. In North Malabar Tiyyar men may marry barber women hypergamously, their children being barbers by matrilineal descent. Barbers are thus socially and sometimes physiologically the 'sons' of Tiyyars. They are also likened by the Tiyyars to their younger brothers. Barbers may not give food to Tiyyars but must attend Tiyyar feasts, when they sit on the left or 'younger' side of the feasting hall, the Tiyyars sitting on the right or 'older' side. Barbers address Tiyyar men as 'elder brother', but Tiyyars address older barber men by name, as they do juniors of their own caste. Despite his low rank, however, the barber is in some situations a paternal figure for Tiyyars. He assists the Tandan in his executive functions and may summon Tiyyar offenders to caste justice. An elderly barber is often a marriage-broker for Tiyyars, but he is primarily a priest for Tiyyar household rites. At a Tiyyar death he instructs the heirs to make offerings to the spirit, in the form of a mud image which he makes. On the fourteenth day, he purifies the household by anointing its members with oil

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and the five products of the cow. This ends their pollution and also the prohibition on using oil for cooking and bathing during the pollution period. The ability of a low caste man to purify a family from pollution (when in other contexts he is less pure than they) is an anomalous situation common in South India which has not so far been explained in sociological terms. It is paralleled by the fact that the washerman's purifying cloth is used by a woman to bathe in after menstruation; the washerman must also supply a similar purifying cloth for Nayars and Tiyyars to stand on when they are being purified by cow's excrements from the pollution of death. In some contexts, the Nayars recognize this anomaly, and thus employ two priests for death-rites, the lower caste funeral priest for ties during pollution, and the Elayad, a low sub-caste of Nambūdiris ranking above Nayars, to purify them and instruct them in final rites to the spirit. The Elayad also consecrates the South Malabar Nayar *idli*, so that the Tiyyar barber may be compared to him as a functionary in the *idli*-rite. In addition, the barber acts as a priest in Tiyyar family shrines in North Malabar dedicated to Bhagavadi and to ancestors. Finally, as barber, he performs the ceremonial hair-cutting of a Tiyyar boy at the age of three, and the ceremonial shaving of a Tiyyar man at a funeral and before other ritual occasions, including the *idli*-rite of his nieces and daughters.

I suggest that the barber, both as a polluting 'younger' person and as a holy one who can conduct Tiyyar ceremonies and purify them from pollution, is both a son-surrogate and a father-surrogate for Tiyyars. His association in death-ceremonies with the spirits of Tiyyar leads me to suspect that he is identified with the ancestors, who, in psycho-analytic terms, collectively represent the father.¹ In this role the barber would resemble the washerman, his 'twin' in the caste-hierarchy, who in masked dances impersonates the dead ancestors and local heroes of both Nayars and Tiyyars in North Malabar and of Tiyyars in the south, and, while possessed by them, declares their will to the *taradd*. We have seen that the washerman, like the barber, may be viewed as a proxy bridegroom to the Tiyyar or Nayar girl in the puberty rites where he instructs her to perform offerings to the lamp as a phallic symbol and sings lewd songs to enhance her fertility.

The barber is also, however (because of hypergamous Tiyyar-barber marriages), a son-figure, and in general caste-terms a junior to the Tiyyar. In this role his ability to act as a kind of bridegroom at the *idli*-rite reminds us of the practice of South Malabar Tiyyars, who select a small boy of an affine *taradd* as proxy bridegroom in the rite. Until about the age of eight, a boy may touch mature women of his own or another lineage. The fact that the small bridegroom is carried into the marriage-shed in the arms of his maternal uncle renders harmless his 'marriage' to the bride: he is a child, brought by a father-figure who adjures him to perform the rite. This fits my hypothesis that the immature girl in these castes is unconsciously likened to the mother: only a father-figure, an infant, or some generalized 'polluted' yet 'holy' figure may approach her with impunity.

My hypothesis that the virgin is unconsciously associated with the mother as a forbidden sexual object rests partly on the fact that in these rites the girl is brought into association with Bhagavadi, the mother-goddess of Nayars and Tiyyars. A branch of her milk-tree is set

¹A psychoanalyst might probably see in the barber's other roles that of father-surrogate. Hair-cutting and shaving are in many parts of the world likened to castration or to a weakening of sexual power. Among Tiyyars they are ceremonially performed for boys at the age of three to five, and for men immediately after a death in the family. The ceremonial head-shaving of a boy (like the ceremonial ear-boring by the goldsmith, another low-caste functionary) is believed to reduce his *saliti* (strength) and render him immune to the evil eye of the envious or to attacks from ghosts. It is possible to argue that the rite is a symbolic castration, performed to protect the child, in phantasy, from the danger of real castration at the hands of his jealous father, whose form is projected in the evil eye and in ghosts who attack small children. After a death, the ritual shaving of the hair is part of a complex of rites to ward off the vengeful anger of the spirit. It goes along with abstinence from intercourse and from sexually stimulating foods, and the carrying of a knife (phallic talisman?) by the heir to ward off the murderous attack of the spirit. I associate head-shaving, like sexual abstinence, with symbolic castration of the mourner to avert the castrating and murderous wrath of the deceased whom, in his unconscious mind, the mourner himself has murdered.

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up in the marriage shed and the rites are conducted before it. Among Nayars it is planted near the sacred corner-post which as we saw is probably a phallic symbol. Among Tiyyars a small branch of the tree is tied to the marriage-pole, thus indicating, perhaps, that Bhagavadi is being 'married' to the divine male tree. The girl is seated upon a plank of the milk-tree. Among Nayars the *talli*-rite is followed by offerings to appease the angry mother.

Bhagavadi or Devi (generic terms meaning goddess) is equated by Nayars and Tiyyars with Durgha and with Kali or Bhadrakali, fierce puranic goddesses who were created by Siva and are his consorts, though, unlike Parvathi his 'regular' wife, they are not represented as actually married to him. Bhadrakali is a black, hideous-faced demon; she is encircled with snakes, has a garland of skulls, four hands holding weapons, long claws and tusks, a protruding tongue, and a mouth dripping blood. She rides upon a lion. She is said by Nayars to have been born from fire which issued in anger from the third eye of Siva to destroy the sacrificer which Daksha, Siva's father-in-law, had prepared for the other gods to the exclusion of Siva himself. Bhadrakali destroyed the sacrificial objects and beheaded Daksha.

Durgha (who is often not distinguished by Malayalis from Kali) rides on a tiger and has ten hands holding weapons. These were given to her by the gods as emblems of their power, to enable her to kill Mahisasura, a buffalo-demon who had gained control of the worlds of gods and men. Both Durgha and Kali have destroyed, beheaded, dismembered, and eaten many other demons in their wars on behalf of the gods.

Other myths of Bhagavadi temples describe the goddess's devotion to Siva and attacks on demons who opposed him. In the myth of the temple at Cape Comorin, Bhagavadi is a virgin with eight brothers who divided between them the kingdom of Bharatha Kandam. Bhagavadi took the southernmost portion round Cape Comorin. Here she did penance to Siva and, when he promised her a boon, desired to copulate with him. He replied that she must first kill Vanasuran, a demon who, by excessive penance to Siva, had gained control of the earth. Vanasuran heard of Bhagavadi and came to marry her. He found her as a beautiful maiden swinging in her garden. She requested him to bring her the flowers of three kinds of fig tree, but, when he did so, she caused them to disappear.¹ Seeing she would not yield, Vanasuran took his sword and fought the virgin who, appearing in terrible form, pierced him with her own sword and cut off his head with her disc. His body disappeared in a hole in the earth, from which sprang a bathing-pool called *chakkra-theertham* ('disc-water').

Bhagavadi is represented by Nayars and Tiyyars both as a mother and as a virgin. The dead Nayar or Tiyyar virgin can, moreover, herself become a species of Bhagavadi. It was formerly believed that if a girl died before the *talli* was tied, her jealous and malignant spirit hovered round the earth inflicting misfortune on her *taravadi*. She was called a *Kannichadu* ('dead virgin'); a shrine must be erected to her and offerings made by her kin. It is this curious equation of the mother and the virgin which leads me to believe that the virgins for whom the *talli* is tied (and who are associated with Bhagavadi in the rites) are also unconsciously likened to the mother.

I suggest an interpretation of the Bhagavadi myths which subsumes under one theory both the myths and the *talli*-rite. That Bhagavadi is their chief deity reflects the supreme importance of the mother in the life of the Nayar and Tiyyar man. The myths show repressed hostility to and fear of the mother which, because of the values of the kinship system, cannot be made conscious and expressed openly in social life. That Bhagavadi dismembers and eats the demons reflects the infant's projection upon the mother of his own oral frustrations in the period of suckling (commonly prolonged to the age of three or four, but abruptly terminated if a sibling is born) and his desire to attack and tear to pieces the mother. Bhagavadi's snake ornaments, weapons, projecting tongue, tusks, claws, and lion and tiger

¹One of the trees was the *Ficus religiosa* (see p. 52).

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vehicles, indicate that she is a phallic mother, the 'mother with a penis' who is a common phantasy for European children too. It is well known that in the unconscious minds of Europeans, the phallic mother usually and perhaps always represents the mother armed with the father's penis, which she has acquired in an act of sadistic intercourse. The infant's fear of approaching her sexually thus becomes a fear of being attacked and castrated by the angry penis of the father which the mother has taken as her weapon. In the myths the demon may in each case be interpreted as a son-figure, for in each case he acquires power as a devotee who does penance to Siva, the father-god in the Tamil and Malayalam countries. The son attacks the mother sexually, but she is pre-armed by Siva or by the other gods with their weapons. In some myths she uses their phallic symbol, the sword (a common castration symbol), to behead the demon-son. In the myth of Vanasuran she pierces the demon with the sword and then kills him with her diac. I associate being killed by means of this circular weapon with being castrated by the vagina in intercourse, and the disappearance into the hole with annihilation by being swallowed up in the mother's body, a phantasy which we see too in the fear of being eaten by the mother. Behind this fear may lie an unconscious desire to return to the womb. This interpretation is likely because bathing in the *shakra-theertham* at Cape Comerin is a means of becoming pure from sin, and purificatory bathing, a common rebirth symbol.

I suggest that the fear of deflowering a virgin issues from this association of her with the phallic mother since, like the mother, she is still in the possession of her lineage kinmen and defended by their sexual organs, which (in phantasy) they or she may use to castrate or attack an aggressor. We saw how, in the Nayar rite, the lineage men in fact attack the bridegroom with 'phallic' missiles (plantain fruits) and how the ritual play with swords suggests a sexual attack and defence.

A further reason why the *Idli* must be tied before puberty may be that the menstruous woman is particularly closely associated with the mother, menstrual blood (see the blood-dripping mouth of Bhadrakali) recalling the infantile phantasy of parental intercourse as a sadistic attack by the father in which the mother is wounded and bleeds, but castrates him and acquires the penis. A virgin who had menstruated but was still in the possession of her lineage kinmen would thus be too terrifying a creature to deflower. This may be why a woman who matured before the *Idli* was tied (i.e. before she was symbolically deflowered and removed from the sexual protection of her kinmen) was considered irrevocably polluting, a creature to be driven from caste and with whom it would be madness to cohabit. It was therefore desirable to make her attain puberty fictitiously in advance by the mock menstruation ceremony, and then actually or symbolically to deflower her before she was in fact mature. Even so, the bridegroom must be a polluted low caste person, whose ritual purity could not be further endangered, or a father-figure to the society at large, or a small boy whose act appears innocuous, or a woman on behalf of her son.

My association of the menstruous woman with the phallic, blood-dripping divine mother rests on the fact that, like the goddess, she is 'sacred' and may not be approached; that she is armed with a knife to ward off evil spirits; and that she is credited with the power to make men impotent (castrate them) if they foolhardily copulate with her. It must be noticed too that the obscene songs sung by the washermen at a Nayar or a Tiyar girl's first menstruation are sung on another occasion, namely the annual Bharani festival to the Bhadrakali of Kodungalur temple in Cochin. In this festival the temple, normally closed to the 'polluting' castes below Nayars, is for seven days flung open to them and deliberately polluted. On the day previous to Bharani, Nayar and low caste pilgrims, drunk with toddy, armed with long staffs, and carrying live cocks, flock in thousands to the temple from all parts of Malabar. On the road they sing obscene songs to the goddess and revile in filthy language women whom they meet.

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language women whom they meet. At the temple they are received by young Nayar girls who sell to them a mixture of yellow turmeric powder, blessed by *mantras*, and receive in return a volley of sexual abuse. Thousands of cocks are sacrificed in the temple yard by the pilgrims as an offering to Bhagavadi who is believed to drink their blood. Hundreds of Nayar, Tiyyar, and Mannan Bhagavadi oracles from all over Malabar prance wildly in the temple courtyard in their red cloths and waist-bands of bells, madly chopping their foreheads till blood flows copiously. In the evening, at a sign from the *adivari* of Kodungalur, the chief of the Mukkuvans (a low fishing caste of the same culture as Tiyyars) begins the work of polluting the actual shrine by rushing up to it and beating the outer wall with his stick. According to Fawcett (1901 p. 245), he formally entered the shrine and defecated on the idol. The crowd of Nayar and low caste men then hurtle, shouting foul abuse, round the shrine, beat on its walls, and fling gold and filth into its interior. The festival ends at dusk when they return quietly home. The next day, the Bharani day itself, the temple is locked and deserted in fear, since it is believed that for seven days following, the foul demon attendants of the goddess are given over to depredations of the shrine and of the idol itself. On the seventh day, its priests reopen the temple, ritually purify it, and restore it to normal high caste worship again.¹

This attack on the goddess by low caste men who may not normally approach her represents, it seems likely, a sexual attack on the mother by son-figures to whom she is normally denied. In it the high caste priests (fathers) vacate the temple; the rules of purity and pollution are reversed; animal sacrifice is indulged in; women and the goddess are insulted in a manner contrary to everyday etiquette; and the Bhagavadi idol formally made the object of an anal attack. The ceremony appears to act out cathartically the incestuous phantasies of Nayar and low caste men towards their mother, and incidentally, in their obscene attack on the Nayar girls, the repressed desires of low caste men towards forbidden women of the higher castes. I suggest that in the singing of obscene songs by the washermen at a Nayar or Tiyyar puberty ceremony, and the use of the barber as a kind of proxy bridegroom at the North Malabar Tiyyar *tali*-rite, these low caste men act out similar phantasies towards higher-caste mother-figures, as well as providing the higher castes with harmless 'polluted' bridegrooms who perform the necessary but dangerous tasks associated with bringing their girls to womanhood.

Why should the Oedipal fear in these castes be so excessively strong that it is necessary ceremonially to renounce the rights in the sexuality of a natal kinswoman before her puberty, yet at the same time dangerous to be the first to receive these rights? I suggest that this is so because of the great power accorded to elders in these castes, made possible by the joint ownership of property by the lineage-segment under the legal headship of its senior man. These property-arrangements perpetuate, often until middle age, male economic and emotional dependence on the parental generation, and enforce the attitudes of reverence and masochistic submission to elders which so characterize the higher Hindu castes. This dependence on the parental generation causes male incestuous wishes to remain primarily fixed on the mother, and secondarily on other close natal kinswomen throughout life, and perpetuates the corresponding unconscious fear of male parental vengeance. It is, therefore, in male phantasy, both necessary to give away the sexual rights in natal kinswomen (who are identified with the mother as desirable but forbidden sexual objects) before they are in danger of becoming mature, yet at the same time dangerous to deflower the virgins of other lineages who, being still 'owned' by their own natal kinsmen, are also unconsciously likened

To the mother.

¹ I saw this festival in 1949. For fuller accounts see Thurston & Rangachari, (1909, V, pp. 400-05) and K. P. Padmanabha Menon (1935, IV, pp. 333-43).

the fourth day this mock marriage is dissolved by cutting to pieces the cloth which ⁵⁸⁸
was given to them the first day.

The *Kalyanam* days are the gayest in the family, and when it is over women keep on saying, "Ah, it takes another twelve years for this to come."

What is the significance of this custom? It must be said to start with that it ¹⁹⁴
has no significance in these days. At least, for the last seventy-five years it has ¹⁸²
been merely a meaningless ceremony, a survival of a peculiar system of marriage. ⁵⁸⁸
The tendency in these days has been to abolish it, though the movement to do so has not gained much influence, except in the higher families.

The significance of this custom in ancient days seems to have been this. It is necessary to say that a system of sexual relationship, the laxity of which made it in many cases indistinguishable from promiscuity, seems to have been prevalent among the Nāyars, even as late as the eighteenth century. The literature of the time abounds in allusions as to how fickle ladies jilted their husbands and married others. A child was supposed to be legitimate as long as a man was willing to meet the expenses of child delivery, and that phrase still survives as a form of reproach against a father who does not treat his son well. A chorus of foreign, as well as Indian ^[851]
evidence, however, proves that sexual relations in the higher families were of a more or less permanent character, and were generally monogamous. ^[595]

The *Talickettu* ceremony was, under these conditions, the actual and religious marriage. After that custom the girl was allowed to choose her own suitor, and when such a suitor, who was her husband, dies, she does not mourn his death, or become a widow, while, when the man who actually tied the *Tali* dies she undergoes certain formalities of mourning. Also the man who tied the *Tali*, though he never sees the girl again, is called "little father" by all the members of the family. All these go to prove that the actual marriage ceremony was the *Talickettu*. It must be remembered that *Tali* (an ornament round the neck) is a symbol of marriage for all ^[765]
Hindus, and among Brahmins all over India the *Tali* round the neck is only broken when the husband dies. If this, then, was the real marriage, what was the actual position occupied by the priest or warrior who tied the *Tali*? The fact that he is conducted to the house after the ceremony seems to point to at least a latent conjugal right. It is quite conceivable that in the days of child marriage this ceremony implied perhaps more than a theoretical right, though, during at least the last hundred years, nothing more than the form has been observed. In this connection it is well to remember a like ceremony performed with great festivities among the *Devadasis* or the "Temple-girls" in other parts of India. They also have a form of marriage which lasts for four days. On each day the girl puts on the dress of the women of different communities, and sits in a big hall, where are gathered together all the women of her local community. This ceremony, it seems, must precede before the girl devotes her life to "temple service." Since the Nāyar women, in olden days, do not seem to have had any settled form of marriage, and were free to ^[771]

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cast off one husband and choose another, the religious rites of marriage had to be performed without any definite marital relationship with any particular man. This seems to be the explanation of *Talikettu Kalyanam*.

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The real marriage *de jure* and *de facto* is the *Sambandham*. "*Sambandham*" is a Sanskrit word, meaning good and close union. A Nāyar girl can have *Sambandham* not only with a Nāyar man, but with Brahmins and Kshatriyas. As a matter of fact the whole system of Nāyar customs seems to have been regulated to suit the purpose of the Nampudiri Brahmins. It must be remembered that a very strict system of primogeniture is prevalent among the Nampudiris, and only the eldest male member in a Nampudiri family marries from among his own caste. Only in case the eldest has no issue, or is incapable of having any, is it that one of his brothers gets the chance to marry in his own community. Generally, therefore, the younger sons of a Nampudiri family marry among the Nāyars. It must also be remembered that it is considered an honour reserved only for the highest Nāyar families to be allied to Nampudiri families by marriage.

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The *Sambandham* customs are of the simplest nature. If the suitor is a Brahmin he goes and tells the *Kārnavan* of his desire to marry the girl. The *Kārnavan* then consults the astrologer for an auspicious date, and informs the village elders. The Brahmin brings some *Pudakas* (i.e., clothes which the wife wears) and hands them over to the girl in the presence of her relations and the neighbours, and it is duly announced that they are married.

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If the suitor is a Nāyar he is generally the girl's father's sister's son. As we have said before, this is considered to be the most proper marriage. In this case it must be remembered the head of the suitor's family approaches the girl's uncle with a proposal that such marriage is eminently desirable, and the *Kārnavan* informs all the necessary people, and the *Pudaka* is given without much ceremony. It is when a stranger wants to marry in the family that all the formalities have to be gone through. Then all the village and all people in any way related are informed and, in the case of rich families, invited to a feast on the auspicious day. After an elaborate and sumptuous meal the village headman and family elders assemble in a hall. A lighted lamp is placed in the middle, and before it a plantain leaf with rice, betel-nut, lemons and spices. The bridegroom is ushered in here nearly half an hour before the ceremony, and he comes accompanied by some members of his family and the chief men of his village. There is a sort of social reunion for some time, and when the auspicious moment arrives, the bride, accompanied either by her mother (or, in some parts, by her mother's brother's wife) enters and approaches the bridegroom. In ordinary cases the bridegroom stands up and takes the clothes which some of his party had brought for him and gives them to the bride. In some cases the uncle of the bridegroom gives them to the mother of the girl.

The ceremony is now supposed to be over. The bride retires with her mother, and for some time a general conversation, including sometimes recitals of odes,

pregnant woman, taking a sword, generally kept for this purpose, and holding it in the left hand points it to her mouth. The juice is then poured on it in such a way as to fall by drops into her open mouth. After this, one of the women of the *enangal* group smears the body and head of the pregnant woman with coco-nut oil and takes her to the tank. She is also required to choose one from a collection of different grains, and it is believed you can say from the choice what the sex of the child is going to be.

The significance of the ceremony seems to be twofold. First, it is the official notification to the allied families as well as to the local village groups of the fact that a woman is lawfully pregnant in the house. The intervention of the *Amūāri* or the mother's brother's wife is supposed to show that everything is as it ought to be. It is, therefore, in the first place merely a social announcement. Secondly, the actual ceremony with the sword is supposed to have the effect of making the child a warrior, and it is believed to impart the virtues of bravery, manliness and honest dealing. It is, therefore, in the classification of Van Genepp, a rite direct, sympathetic, automatic and positive. The tamarind juice is believed to create sensitiveness and honour. It is a "contagionist" rite. Whenever a man shows cowardice, the question that is asked as a mark of contempt is: "Were you not born after *Pulicudi*?" or "did not your mother drink the tamarand juice?"

After the *Pulicudi* there are many prohibitions which a pregnant woman has to respect. Of this the most important is the absolute sexual tabu which dates from the *Pulicudi* to forty days after the childbirth. Other tabus are mainly connected with food and are mostly "contagionist" positively or negatively. Thus the woman is not supposed to take very warm food, as it might scorch the head of the child; she is not supposed to eat much hot food (chilis, pepper, etc.), because it might put out the eyes of the child. There are no definite rules about these, but every mother in her desire to do the child no possible harm keeps herself away from all doubtful matter.

After the birth of the child there is a mild pollution (as compared to the strong untouchable pollution caused by death) in the family. This pollution does not carry any disabilities except the prohibition to enter any sacred precincts. On the fifteenth day there is a purificatory ceremony, but there are no festivities or celebrations connected with it.

The mother and the child are accommodated in a special room which no man may enter. Unmarried girls, unless they are little children, are also not allowed to go near. The child, of course, can be seen by all after the cutting and burying of the umbilical cord. It is handed round to the father and other interested relations. No kind of food except the mother's milk is given to it, and, if the mother died at the birth of the child, it is generally given the milk of some relations or even of outsiders who have children of almost the same age. The person whose milk the child thus drinks, though she be an outsider, is considered equal to its own mother, and her children are considered the same as own brothers. There is a story of a Nāyar

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This is mostly due to two reasons:

First of all, there is the joint family system which provides for all the members without distinction. Secondly, every Nayar family lives on its own plot of ground on which coco-nut palms are grown, which bring in a small but quite comfortable sum.

The standard of life is comparatively high. Among the richer classes it is fairly decent, even according to the higher material standards of Europe, while, among the poorer classes, it never comes anywhere near the uncleanness, the misery, the unrefined and uncultured barbarism which is the atmosphere of the slum life of the big cities of Europe. Poverty is less disreputable than in civilised communities, and the difference this makes is immense. The peculiarly civilised idea that success is the criterion of intrinsic merit, and that, consequently, failure by itself proves that it was deserved, is almost totally unheard of among the Nayars. The fact that the individual members of a family have to pool their abilities and, to some extent, their personal incomes, prevents the sharp distinction between the rich and the poor which is so characteristic of societies organised on an individual basis.

Food.—The Nayars are not vegetarians. Like all Hindus, they do not eat beef, but nothing else is prohibited. Fish is a favourite article of food, and there is an old couplet which sings:

"Katal vizhakka Kari gunoru eaku
Bhain Bhojana matu Kootililla."

"Then there is a kind of banana of the seas (fish)
And the Nayars cannot live without it."

There is another couplet, which says:

"There is nothing among the various kinds of food which equals the flesh of a boar."

The Nayars are great epicures and they cook beautifully. Rice, of course, is the staple food, but milk curds, butter and ghee are things of equal importance.

Most Nayar families have three meals a day. The breakfast, among the poor people, consists of rice boiled with water in the form of a pudding. With it is taken as relishes pickles, fried fish, cooked vegetables, etc. The next meal is at noon. The main course, of course, is rice. The first part of it is eaten with butter, boiled peas, and many other relishes. The second course is fish, vegetables, etc., mixed with rice. The third part is eaten with buttermilk, mangoes, and pickles. The supper at night is also a meal of which rice is the chief part. The thing about it is that, though the main course is the same as porridge among the Scotch, the variety, as well as the taste, of the subsidiary dishes is what makes all the difference.

Clothing.—The typical Nayar (male) clothing is the *Mundu*. This is generally 2½ yards long, 1½ yards broad, cloth of fine texture made at Eraniyal, in South Travancore. Nowadays, people wear cotton cloth from Lancashire, while the richer classes go in for Benares silk.

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Caste assigns to each individual his profession or calling; and when once the system is handed down from father to son, and from generation to generation, it is found impossible for any person or his descendants to change for any other the condition of life which the law assigns to him. The most far-sighted and prudent men in ancient times probably found such an institution to be the only means for maintaining a system of civilisation amongst a people endowed with the peculiar characteristics of the Hindus.

The important principle which guided all ancient legislators was, that no man in the commonwealth should be left without work. At the same time, they knew that the people were indolent by nature. They were further aware of the fact that, unless every individual was duly provided with some work, for which he might be best fitted, the social fabric must necessarily fall to pieces. The law-givers therefore established durable and inviolable rules for the different castes constituting the Hindu race; the violation of which brings divine displeasure, and meets with severe punishment both in this world and in the world to come.

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It is some such guiding principle that is involved in the division of the Nayers into various sub-castes. In Kerala the Brahmans seem to have been instrumental in the formation of castes to some extent: for, it is found that some castes have to do services in temples to Brahmans. Distinct professional groups in the tribal organisations may have existed there before the advent of these people, who probably found it easy to make a ready adjustment of the social groups, and thought it advisable to assign to them well defined occupations. Therefore, the original institution of the caste system does not merit any serious condemnation.

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Some are of opinion that it is not quite correct to say that the Nayers are a caste, and that it would be better to call them a tribe, as Bhattacharya has done in his 'Castes and Sects'. I am however inclined to think that the name is not quite appropriate, and that they do form a caste of people, known as Malayali Sudras.

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In regard to subdivisions, there is no uniformity. So numerous and varied are they in Cochin, Malabar, and Travancore, that titles of distinction that have been conferred upon

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CHAPTER II.

—:O:—

THE SUDRAS OF COCHIN.

—:O:—

A. THE HIGH CASTE SUDRAS (NAYARS)

(Continued).

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According to Nayar ideas the most desirable bride for a young man is the daughter of his maternal uncle.

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Marriage customs.

There are two forms of marriage in vogue among the Nayars, namely, the *Thdlikettu kalydnam* (*tali* tying ceremony), and the *Sambandham* (the customary nuptial union of man and woman), the first of which is performed for every girl before puberty, and the second, the real adult marriage, is celebrated after she comes of age. The *tali* tying for every girl is compulsory before she arrives at maturity, and the omission or neglect of it will place her and her family under a ban: for, it is considered a religious impurity for a girl to attain puberty before the performance of this ceremony. There is however a tendency for these restrictions to be overlooked now-a-days.

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In every *taravdd* or family, the ceremony is performed once in ten or twelve years, and all the girls down to the baby in the cradle, who have not already undergone this ceremony, are married in this fashion for the sake of economy. When, in a family, the *tali* tying ceremony has to be performed for a girl or a number of girls, the *kuranavan* or senior member thereof, at a meeting of the friends and relatives of the family, sends for the local astrologer, who after examining the horoscope or horoscopes of the girl or girls determines the auspicious hour for it as well as for certain subsidiary rites

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1. As a rule, the *tali* tying ceremony is performed before the girl attains puberty, but sometimes it is performed afterwards. In the latter case, the girl is prohibited from entering temples during the period intervening between the attainment of puberty and the *tali* tying ceremony.

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kalyāṇam of the Nayars and the marriage ceremony among other Hindus. All available evidence unmistakably points to the conclusion that the former is, in intention, if not in effect, the actual marriage ceremony of the Hindus. The ceremonials in the two cases differ very little; there is, however, one exception, namely, that in the case of Brahmans and others, vedic *mantrams* are recited, while the Nayars are compelled to substitute Brahmani *pōttu* (song), which should be uttered in the *Rig vēdic swaram*. Ever since the institution of this system of marriage in Kerala, these songs have been in existence, and they invoke the blessings of numerous children for the pair. It must also be noted that, among all Brahmans, the wedding ceremony is divided into two parts, namely, the first in which the ceremonials form the chief feature, known as betrothal, and the second, popularly known as consummation or the real marriage. In the case of Nayars and other *marumakkathāyām* Hindus, the *tīli* tying ceremony for a girl, which is performed before the first sign of menstruation, refers to the betrothal, and the *sambandham* to the real marriage. There is this important difference that, while the Brahmans perform the ceremony after the selection of a husband and postpone the union of the couple to a future date, the *marumakkathāyām* people perform the ceremony first and select the husband on the second occasion, i. e., when the girl is fit to be united to her husband. Hence the bridegroom in the first ceremony acts the part of a vicarious husband. But when the husband is ready at hand, it is not unusual for the girl to be actually married on the occasion of *tīli* tying. The reason for this departure may have been due to the scarcity of suitable young men in the old troublous times and the consequent difficulty of securing a proper husband for every girl before puberty and the danger of girls being out-casted in default of it. Hence it is that the early legislators have devised this convenient plan to allow every girl to be married in a sense with the necessary religious ceremony, and enable her to remain unmarried for life without being subject to excommunication from caste. This view is supported by the fact, that the Nayars were, till towards the close of the eighteenth century, a fighting race and that there was a great loss of lives in the wars with neighbouring principalities and tribes. As in other matters the letter of the law has been closely followed, without a corresponding adherence to its spirit.

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592 by the woman's brother or some other senior member as
[42] karanavan.

There are some who love and admire the system, and they depict the *tarawād* as a group of males and females bound together by the sacred tie of common descent from one ancestors' grand-mother. "The females have only to follow the natural instinct to be fruitful and to multiply, while the males, free from all care for their own progeny, are expected to labour like the honey bee for the common good of the *tarawād*-hive, and pour their earnings into the lap of the venerable *karanavan*, who, in the exercise of absolute discretion, administers the income for the benefit of all. Protected by the impartibility of the estate, refreshed by the acquisitions of the junior members, and under the beneficent sway of the senior male, the *tarawād* would rise high and endure through generations."¹ The advantages of such a complete joint family system are three-fold: firstly, the genial society it affords, the closest association of young and old, and the abundant opportunity for recreation and instruction; secondly, in the process of production many of the advantages of concerted labour are secured, as is obvious, without carelessness, dishonesty or misdirected production and consumption; and thirdly, there is the remarkable saving in the process of consumption. The [562] freedom and independence of Nayar women, their influence in the family and the absence of conventional restrictions, such as child marriage, enforced widowhood and the other customs which exercise so baneful an influence upon Hindu society elsewhere are other advantages that add to the excellence of the Nayar system of life.

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The system above described, may have worked smoothly enough in former days; but in these days of civilization, with the growing wants of the members, coupled with the indifference and selfishness of the *karanavan* and the other members, the joint family tends to disintegration. At a certain point the mere increase of the members renders it intolerable for them all to live together under one roof, and when that stage is reached, the *tarawād* splits up into *tavashis*, each containing a mother, her brothers and her children.

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It is to the woman that the fortune of the family belongs, and yet she is not the mistress of the house but only one

of many joint members dependent on the *kāranavan*. The females and the junior members pass their lives in utter discontent and misery, if the *kāranavan* happens to be unsympathetic and tyrannical. The father is not the legal guardian of his children, for whose training and education the *kāranavan* is responsible. In families, where there are many boys and girls, the chances are that he educates none of them, on the plea that he cannot afford to educate them all, nor can he make any invidious distinction. The family, in certain cases, becomes the seat of envy, hatred and dissensions, and not a day passes without some dispute or other among the members. It is said that with the advancement of civilization the system becomes more and more unworkable; it offends against every principle of economy, healthy life and natural affection. By freeing a man from the obligation of maintaining his wife and children, it sanctions the reckless propagation of species, destroys the motive power for prudence and foresight, forces up the population to the very point where it must be kept down by actual want of means of subsistence. It "huddles together" as a family a number of distant relatives not necessarily drawn to each other by any bond of natural affection. It makes home life impossible, for the father is a casual visitor, and mother and children are but units in a heterogeneous flock, dependent on a practically irresponsible guardian, who from a mere accident of his being the eldest of the flock is expected to be able to regard every member with an impartial eye, and at the same time preserve the interests of his wife and children.¹ These causes are at work and tend to divide the families into several branches in the direction of *tivashis* by partition. Fortunately, in the Cochin State, such evils as those above described are of rare occurrence, for partition is effected as early as the symptoms of disunion and ill-feeling among the members are visible.

1. Malabar Marriage Commission Report, page 48.

a Nayar *tarawād*, all the members are equally entitled to a share. The self-acquisitions of each member of a *tarawād* are at his absolute disposal during his life-time, but this right lapses to the *tarawād* on his death.¹ In families where the *kāranavans* look after the welfare of each individual member and the savings of the junior members go to increase the wealth of the family, there is peace and prosperity. Such families are rarely found in these days. Times are changed, as also the conditions of the community, and the old and large families are disappearing through mismanagement. In the majority of cases, when the senior member takes up the management, he is too old and unfit to govern a score of men and women younger than himself and bound to him by no natural tie of affection. He often becomes a mere puppet in the hands of an unscrupulous but stronger member while the other members of the *tarawād* suffer from the injustice consequent under such circumstances. In some cases he misappropriates the family property and alienates it in favour of his wife and children, and the gross acts of spoliation carried on by *kāranavans* have reduced some of the respectable families in Malabar and elsewhere to poverty and misery. It is also said, that the junior members are disobedient and do not work for the common good and this state of things is also common everywhere. Another cause for the downfall of the ancient family system is the growing disinclination among its junior members to work for the common good of the *tarawād* and their dislike to the rule of the *kāranavan*.²

The Nayars who follow this *marumakkathiyam* law of inheritance include nearly all the aristocracy of the country, but the notion that every *tarawād* has an estate sufficient to feed an indefinite number of souls is unfounded and erroneous. Most of the families are poor, and the *kāranavans* are mere tenant farmers cultivating a few acres of land on a precarious tenure, and a law which requires such a man, from the produce of his farm, to feed and provide for all the descendants of his female relatives from the time of their birth to their death, whether they work or not, is one of those laws which continue to exist in name but are actually disregarded in practice.³

In ancient times the rulers of Cochin held supreme sway in the territories which belonged to them. There were no regular councils, nor assemblies;

Tribal organisations.

1. II, Mad. H. C. R. 162.

2 and 3. Malabar Marriage Commission Report, pages 49-51.

the eye, buffaloes with white tips to their tails, wild elephants caught in traps and wild hogs that had fallen into wells.

Even in social matters, these chieftains had supreme powers. In the settlement of marriages in any part of the country, the Nayars had to obtain the chieftain's sanction who held sway over the particular locality. The custom is even now in vogue though in a visibly weakened form. In the celebration of a *Kettu kalyanam* or *sambandham* in any part of the country, the parties concerned visited the chieftain and bought his consent with presents. For without such consent no settlement and celebration thereafter could be arranged. His consent had to be procured even for the holding of festivals.

The chieftain's powers were so great that, if a wife living with her husband proved an object of attraction to another, adequate presents to the chieftain would buy him a formal writ, giving him the rights of a husband over that woman. Thus even so late as only a generation or two ago, the chieftain's power was exercised in the encouragement of polyandry.

When a tali-tying ceremony had to be performed for a girl of any decent family in a locality, she was taken to the local chieftain with a nuzzar or *tirumukdshcha* and other things prepared for the festival that was to follow. In return the girl was given a golden bracelet which she was authorised to wear in his presence. No girl who had not received such a one could wear it.

In certain parts of the State people were afraid to erect buildings of more than one storey, lest they should incur the inexorable wrath of the chieftain; nor were they allowed to tile thatched houses. Departures from these customs were allowed only with the consent of the chieftain, embodied in a writ issued by him. In rural parts even to this day such restrictions are not totally inoperative. In the State His Highness the Raja gives his sanction in regard to some social matters even to this day and Nambutiri landlords exercise a similar authority among the tenants occupying their lands. Certain kinds of conveyances such as palanquins and dholies were reserved only for chieftains while the *Pallichans* were the only people who were employed to carry them. Various titles

only training was the training of the memory, and the learned pedagogue never bestowed a thought on cultivating the thinking powers or the originality of his pupils. But this type of school and school-master is fast disappearing under the modern regime of elementary schools. ⁸⁷²
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Next in importance to the school-master is the Kaniyan, ⁷⁹¹
an indispensable factor in the affairs and ceremonies of the ⁵⁵⁴
village.¹

Then come the artisan classes whose services are necessary in the construction of houses, and the making of implements of agriculture. They were paid for their work either in kind or in coin. ⁵⁶⁴

The other men of importance in the village economic life were the physician, the village washerman, and the village barber. The village physician was a man of parts; for, not only did he tend the sick and the ailing, but also cast out devils from persons possessed, and with the aid of well prepared charms guarded them from the effects of the evil eye. The village washermen were of the Veluthédan and the Mannán caste. The services of the former were always requisitioned when people wished to become free from pollution, an act the omission of which leads to outcasting. ⁷⁵⁹
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The village barber is another indispensable factor in the village ceremony and is employed for the shaving before all ceremonies. His privileges cannot be encroached upon by his own caste-men from other villages. ³⁰⁵

The village organisation above described is preserved to a certain extent even now and most probably the Kaniyan's profession will survive all other relics of Hindu institutions, as his services are considered to be of essential importance in matters of every day life. ⁶²¹
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The ordinary games pursued by the young men of the village are the foot-ball matches, *Attakalam*, *Kayyámkali*, and *Kaikottikkali* (a favourite circular dance of the women), *Uzhinjúl* and others, while cards and chess are common enough on festive occasions. Cock-fighting is an interesting pastime among the lower classes. ⁵²⁶
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The most important of the village pastimes are the dramatic performances, a description of which is given in the following pages. The drama in Malabar sprang into being in ⁵³⁶
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1. Vide my account of the Kaniyans, Vol. I, Chap. XI, pages 190-93.

upon with contempt. It must be noted that they live separately, having little or nothing in common with the other classes, and that the institution is dying a silent and natural death.

Songs.—There have been very many songs current among the Nayars even from a very remote period; and they are chiefly composed and sung in honour of deities, and are mostly prayers addressed to them. A translation of these is not here attempted, for they lose much of their beauty, but the following, however, are the most important of them:—

Bhadrakali Pattu:—These are songs which are sung in honour of Káli, and are supposed to have been composed by the Sudras of Palghat long before the Malayalam era. Certain dramatic songs also appear to have been composed about the same time, and refer to the deities on the hills as well as to the kings of the period. They are sung in towns and villages, between Anamala and Trichur in the east, and the Walayar forests on the other side. The ancient name of these localities was Cheranad, and it was the first place to be occupied by people, when Kerala was a marshy tract. As evidence of this, remains of houses are still to be seen at the foot of the hills. In a place of such historic importance were composed and sung these songs, which are so full of the ideas of the Vedānta and Yoga philosophies, and which give a clue to the nature of the people who once lived there. There is also another variety of songs referring to *Dārikavadham*, (murder of the demon Dārikan), and they are sung by a class of men called the *Kurippans*. There are also other old songs such as the *Sāsta pōttu* (songs in honour of Sāsta).

Ganapati pōttu (songs in honour of Ganapati) and serpent songs:—Among the old songs, those referring to agriculture, and composed during the third century of the Malayalam era, occupy a prominent place, and the agriculturists of the northern parts of the State even to-day follow the precepts laid down in these songs. But excepting, the song commemorating the deeds of *Meppayil Kunji Othenan*, the Robinhood of North Malabar, there are no songs which sing of the deeds of brave men.

The chief festivals.—(1). *Onam*:—This is an important national festival, which falls in the second half of August or the first half of September, and is celebrated in commemoration of Mahābali, an *Asura* king, whose reign is believed

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CHAPTER V.

THE SUDRAS OF COCHIN.

A. THE HIGH CASTE SUDRAS (NAYARS)

(Continued).

Among the high caste Nayars, the recognition of caste by ⁵⁶⁴
 occupation is not possible. They were at one ¹⁷⁸
 time a military caste, and as a relic of it, the
 small force of infantry maintained by the State is still known
 by the name of the ancient military caste of Kerala. Aristocratic military leaders of the feudal ages, who then derived their incomes chiefly from landed property, in these times of uninterrupted peace and tranquillity, are but shadows of their former state. Some of them are almost penniless, and while a few families maintain their ancient position, most of them have lost prestige and influence. Among the lower classes of Nayars, there are sub-castes who by occupation were potters, weavers, oil-mongers, and copper-smiths; but the men of these sub-castes have abandoned their traditional occupations, and even consider it a disgrace to be known by their original occupation. This is partly due to the acquisition of wealth by ^[355]
 a number of the caste-men, and partly to their attempts to rise in the social scale by engaging themselves in other walks of life. There are again some classes (*Illakkirs* or *Sudras*) of Nayars who rendered personal services to the Nambuthiris or to their own community, and the tendency has been to discontinue the services and take to other more respectable calling.

The Nayars numbered 1,11,837 at the last Census, and of ¹⁶²
 these, 28,786 are agriculturists. These include tenant farmers, ^[463]
 agricultural labourers, growers of special products and those connected with agricultural training and forests. Very few ^[182]
 take to manufacture and trade. The sentiments generated by the old feudalism, a rigid conservatism of caste and their residence in rural areas account for it to a great extent.

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The Nayar Family in a Disintegrating Matrilineal System¹

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Introduction

IN this short essay, I will present one case of the disintegration of a Nayar *tarwad* (matrilineal joint family), based on the materials collected by myself.

The general institutional system of a traditional Nayar *tarwad* is already well known, and has been much discussed recently by anthropologists, including K. Gough.² Here I state it briefly as a preface to the main discussion. A traditional Nayar *tarwad* was a property group consisting of a matrilineal lineage exclusively, headed and represented by the senior male member, called *karanavan*. Normally the members of a *tarwad* formed a distinguishable domestic unit. Spouses of the members of a *tarwad* resided in the *tarwad* where they were born, and a husband visited his wife at her *tarwad* at night and returned early morning. The father had no duty or obligation on his own children, instead, the *karanavan* was the legal guardian of the offspring of the female members of the *tarwad*.

The Nayars are one of the Hindu upper castes in Kerala, next to the Namudri Brahman, and traditionally the majority of the Nayars had been land holders or managers, not cultivators. On such a social and economic base, the function of the *tarwad* had been maintained. Various factors have led to the disintegration of the *tarwad* system, the major cause of which, I think, was the economic changes accompanied by modernization since the beginning of the

1 This essay is one of the outcomes of my field work on matrilineal systems in India (1955-56) carried out by the generous grant of the Elin Wagner Foundation in Sweden, to which my profound acknowledgement goes. Also I am very thankful for the help of Dr. John Magey.

2 E. Kathleen Gough: "Changing kinship usages in the setting of political and economic change among the Nayars of Malabar," *J. R. Anthropol. Inst.* 82, pp. 71-87; "A comparison of incest prohibitions and the rules of exogamy in three matrilineal groups of the Malabar," *International Archives of Ethnography*, Vol. XLVI, Part I, 1952, pp. 82-105.

3 The *karanavan* was an exception: he could take his wife and children in his *tarwad*. In North Malabar, not only the *karanavan*, but also other male members used to take their wives and children to their *tarwad*. However, these wives, including children, had to leave their husband's *tarwad*, as soon as their husband died.

19th century. In this connection, I was much interested in studying court records and various documents, including the *Nayar Regulation II, 1925, Travancore*, and the *Malabar Marumakkathayam Act of 1933*, which legally marked the end of the functional Nayar *tarwad* system. Actual partition of an individual *tarwad* occurred earlier, or later, than these acts.¹ However the present discussion is concerned mainly with the internal situation of the *tarwad* as it disintegrated, the discussion of external factors and causes of the disintegration of the *tarwad* are omitted.

The process of the disintegration of the *tarwad* can be summarized in terms of the essential elements which constitute the functional body of a *tarwad*:

- A. members of a matrilineal lineage exclusively
- B. co-residential (domestic) unit
- C. property owning unit
- D. headed by the *karanavan*
- E. Ceremonial unit.

In the disintegration of the *tarwad*, the group loses these elements gradually. The element which is lost first seems to be B. A population which exceeds the limit of the accommodation of a *tarwad* building, results in residential separation of small segments of a matrilineal group who have the same grandmother, or grand-grandmother, called *tawari*. Such a group, residing in a separate household, in the course of time tends to develop as a temporal economic unit. Though the ancestral property is held in common by all members of the *tarwad* together, the residential sub-group would become a semi-independent productive and consumption unit: the income would not be pooled into the *tarwad* but consumed by the members of each group. Hence the function of the *karanavan* as the head of the *tarwad*, the property group, becomes incomplete.

At the same time, when the residential unit becomes smaller, it would give chances for the inclusion of spouses and the element A would be shaken. The cohabitation of wife and husband leads to the inclusion of nonmatrilineal members in a matrilineal residential group. These factors bring on economic and psychological confusion in the duties and obligations of a *tarwad* member. Thus, by the destruction of elements A, B, and C, the status of the *karanavan* becomes ambiguous. There occur various disputes between the *karanavan* and other members on the rights of the *tarwad* property.

This situation is enhanced by the fact that an increase of members who have an independent income without depending on the *tarwad* property, form an independent household with his wife and children. This situation makes it difficult to maintain the *tarwad* as a property unit, and also infringes the function of the *karanavan*. In fact the actual contribution of the father who was not the legal guardian of his children is significant in the failure of the role of the *karanavan* for the matrilineal members. Thus at last a *tarwad* has no alternative

¹ A report of my study on these legal documents, including materials given in this paper, was published in Japanese: "On the disintegration of the Nayar *tarwad*," *Memoirs of the Institute for Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo*, Vol. 14, pp. 1-131, 1958.

except to cease to function, and to divide the *tarwad* property among individual members. Theoretically the loss of the elements A, B, C and D marks the end of the *tarwad* institution. Nevertheless, the *tarwad* is still conceptualized as a distinctive social and ceremonial group by the element E, in spite of the loss of all other elements.

In 1956 (March-June) when I studied the Nayar, most of the *tarwad* in Kerala had already ceased to exist as a functional body. In a large building named *tarwad* where once lived more than fifty members of a matrilineal family, I found only a few members: such as an old mother and her daughter with her husband and children. The members of each *tarwad* were dispersed, forming independent small households each with a spouse and children, having already partitioned the *tarwad* property. Many of the older generation who are aged fifty and the head (father) of the household consisting of an elementary family, were born in a *tarwad*, and had experiences of the *tarwad* life. They are the people who lived through the dramatic stage of the disintegration of the *tarwad*. Their life history itself reflects the great changes in the Nayar matrilineal system.

It is extremely interesting to study through these living members the process, by which the members of a *tarwad* organized on a strict matrilineal principle, without allowing cohabitation of husband and wife, gradually reorganized into many individual elementary families in the course of half a century. The disintegration of the Nayar system as a whole took about two centuries but it seems that the actual disintegration of an individual *tarwad* is about half a century. The following discussion deals with how individual members acted at various stages of the disintegration of the *tarwad*; and what the changes of the matrilineal system actually mean to those individuals who are involved; and what are the consequences of the disintegration of the *tarwad*.

Marayil Tarwad

The *tarwad* which I have chosen for study is named Marayil, and one of the Nayar *tarwad* in Ernakulum, Cochin. This *tarwad* had many advantages for my purposes. The majority of the members of the *tarwad*, who now form many different households, still reside near each other, within the thirty minutes walk. The number of the descendants of the foundress of the *tarwad* amounts to 94 altogether in May 1956, ranging through seven generations. Many *tarwad* were much bigger in numbers, and deeper in generations, than this. Another advantage is that it represents a *tarwad* of a typical upper middle class among the Nayar caste in this area: present occupations of these members are government officials, advocates, teachers, etc. They have very friendly relationships with many other Nayars in this area, and are thought of as respectable people. The husbands, at every generation, are all Nayars, without a single case of a marriage with a Nambudri Brahman, as is common among the upper class Nayar in this area, nor with a Irawa, the caste below the Nayar.

Marayil *tarwad* was founded around 1830. The first partition by which the

[text continues on p. 21]

[Marayil Tarwad]

by which the

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Marayil tarwad was founded around 1830. The first partition
tarwad split into two residential groups (Marayil and East Marayil), occurred in
1898, and the final partition of the property by individual members was in 1944.

In May 1956 the living members of the tarwad were grouped into ten different households (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, and J of the Diagram); the male members who are not included in these groups formed each household with wife and children. The relationships of these households show that the degree of familiarity is paralleled with the genealogical distance as well as geographical distance. According to my own observations, the following different stages of the matrilineal group consciousness were noticeable.

First, the strong coherence of matrilineal members, appear in the groups consisting of the members of A, B, and C, and that of D and E. The members of each group meet almost every day; their daily life gives an impression as if they were still carrying on the tarwad life. For example, when one household is visited by a guest, others are usually called to join the talking, and often enjoy tea and meals together. In fact, the households of each group are direct neighbours of each other.

Secondly, the group whose members have the same grand-grandmother (consisting of A-B-C and D-C together) is distinguished by the amount of contact of its members with each other, against other members. They meet at least two or three times a week. The third level of group consciousness appears in the group consisting of all descendants of the foundress, including both Marayil and East Marayil. If necessary, they visit each other; if they pass near a house of the group, they are ready to visit. The manner of speaking is a bit more formal than that of first and second groups. However this is distinguished as the ceremonial unit. Though they lost the function of the property group (Mudal Sambantham), they maintain strongly the function of the ceremonial group (Pula Sambantham); funerals, marriages and seasonal festivities are carried out by these members altogether. For this corporate unit, 32 (refer to the number of the Diagram) is acting as the head. This is indeed the last function which is left for the members of Marayil tarwad; it is the matrilineal lineage with the same history; all members clearly can trace their genealogical relations with each other.

Further than this range, there is no group consciousness, but these members of Marayil tarwad observe exogamy from those members of Mullasser, another tarwad, from which Marayil had sprung. Though they cannot trace exact genealogical relationships, by the observation of exogamy, Mullasser members are considered as matrilineal distant kin, sociologically different from other Nayar.

Disintegrating Process of Marayil Tarwad

Based on the information of the present members the Marayil was founded by Prabaty Amma (I). The process of the foundation of this tarwad is as follows:

[Marayil Tarwad]

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613 The story goes back to the early 19th century. Prabaty Amma who came to visit a
193 temple in Ernakulam, met a young Nayar man. Soon after they were fallen in love, and married. The name of this young man was Narayana Panikkar, who was a district officer in Palgat, and later became the *karanavan* of his *tarwad*. By the right of the *karanavan*, he took his wife to his *tarwad*.

613 Thirty years after their marriage, Narayana Panikkar died. According to the law of
193 the Nayar, his wife and children had to leave from his *tarwad* at the moment of his death. Prabaty Amma accompanied with her children left his *tarwad*, but she did not return to her natal *tarwad*, Mullasserri. Instead, she decided to reside in the house which had been built by her husband for her as a gift. She named this *tarwad* Marayil, thus she and her children became independent from Mullasserri *tarwad*. It was said in this time, her mother's *tarwad*, Mullasserri, was so full with her matrilineal kin, hence she preferred to reside in this new house with her sons and daughters. This house is at present occupied by E. group. At the establishment of this new *tarwad*, I think, she must have had some land, or managing rights in farming land, given by her natal *tarwad* or by her husband as a gift, but I failed to discover the economic basis on which this *tarwad* life had been carried on.

613 Thus established, the new *tarwad* grew bigger in the course of time. In 1898,
195 the increase of its members led to the first residential partition into two groups, as already stated. It was twenty years after the marriage of the granddaughter of Prabaty Amma, 12 and her daughter 29 who was born in 1888, was ten years old, and 39 is said to have been born in this *tarwad* around this year. From these data, it can be assumed that all members from 1 to 39 of Marayil *tarwad* lived in this *tarwad* building together. The situation of the members of this old *tarwad* before the partition in 1898 is as follows.

613 Married members of this *tarwad* mostly practiced "visiting marriage" (see
591 Diagram, the majority of male members were visiting husbands). Seventeen
593 out of twenty-three cases of marriages in the second and the third generations, took a visiting form. Five cases who did not practice "visiting marriage" were
182 younger ones of the third generation, whose ages are almost equal to those of
175 the older members of the fourth generation. In the fourth generation, the cases of the visiting marriages decreased to four out of nineteen cases. These facts reveal that the residential pattern became more neolocal than duolocal during the fourth generation: by this time many had already established independent households in which they lived with their wife and children, having an independent income. These members are shown by ▲ in the Diagram.

A more careful examination of this Diagram, reveals that this tendency had already started in the third generation, as appeared in the case of the husband of 12, Nando Pillai. He had used to visit his wife for twenty years after his marriage. He was a brilliant and successful man who had an important post in the palace of the Cochin Maharaja, which allowed him to accumulate considerable wealth. He made a new *tarwad* building for his sisters as their *karanavan*, and again in 1898 he built a new beautiful *tarwad* with a big garden, where he himself lived with his wife and children, thus making his wife independent from her *tarwad*. This house is at present occupied by the C group.

613 Then Marayil *tarwad* already suffering from over population, stimulated
591 by this event, split into two groups: one was the *tawari* of eldest daughter of
175 Prabaty Amma, another was that of the second and third daughters. The latter
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[Marayil Tarwad]

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group was named "East Marayil," while the former retained the original name "Marayil." The property was not entirely divided, but managed independently. The group of East Marayil shifted their residence to one mile east of the original one.

After the first partition, in the new Marayil group where I concentrated my study, the *karanavan* was at this time 15. Among the members of this group, 12 and her sons and daughters had a separate residence built by her husband, Nando Pillai, and supported by him without help from her *tarwad*. It seems to have been already customary in this period among those Nayars who had a considerable individual income, to establish an independent household for their elementary families, as in the case of Nando Pillai. By these men a new type of family came into being alongside the matrilineal joint family.

Nevertheless, it was to take a long time for the establishment of such an elementary family with a neolocal residence pattern among the majority of the Nayars. As the next generation of this case shows, in spite of the paternal activities of Nando Pillai, the family retained its matrilineal pattern. His eldest daughter did not leave the house, and her husband practiced the traditional visiting marriage; the second daughter 29 returned to this house after her husband, who was the *karanavan* of another *tarwad*, died. However, his sons left his house each establishing an independent house where they lived with their wives. As a result, the first and second daughters, with their children, occupied this house, which produced a very similar pattern to a traditional *tarwad*, except for the absence of married out male members.

Through this picture, we can see that the role of the husband/father lies in the establishment of a new segment of a matrilineal group, rather than in the establishing of a nonmatrilineal system. The basic framework of the Nayar system was still matrilineal in this stage. As the result, a *tarwad* or Nayar household was often occupied by some married female members and their children, though the total number of the matrilineal members decreased rapidly by marrying-out members.

The fact that husbands of 26 and 38 did practice visiting marriage might give an impression that they were very old fashioned in their time, but it is really the outcome of the residential situation in the transitional stage: for some of the female members, it was natural to remain in the vacant *tarwad*; and a husband might not have enough economic resources to establish a new house for his wife and children, or might be occupied by the work of his own *tarwad*.

Such a stage also introduced uxori-local marriage which was new to the Nayar. A husband, instead of building a new house for his wife and children, used the vacant wife's *tarwad* or wife's house built by her father, and he supported his family largely by his own income, as in the cases of 25, 34 and 53. Therefore, even in such uxori-local cases, paternal authority was well developed. When the *tarwad* was in full function, the Nayar never practiced uxori-local residence, though there were cases of viri-local residence. Uxori-local residence in this case is irrelevant to the matrilineal system: it came into the picture because of the disintegration of the matrilineal system. It should be treated as a different problem from the uxori-local residential patterns of other matrilineal systems.

[Marayil Tarwad]

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613 The increase in the establishment of paternal elementary families gradually
425 split the *tarwad* into pieces, lessening the function of the *tarwad*. This Marayil
175 *tarwad* finally divided its property between individual members in 1944, as did
182 many *tarwad* in this period. This was forty-seven years since the first partition
in 1898, and this period saw the disintegration of this *tarwad*.

613 The members of the fourth and fifth generations in the Diagram make up
175 the transitional period: they had the *karanavan* as the head of the *tarwad* and at
182 the same time they played a role of the husband/father as in a patrilineal family.
[593] Their duties and obligations were transitional from those of the *karanavan* to
[429] those of the father. Though by law then the *karanavan* was the legal guardian of
the members of a *tarwad*, actually the father who lived with his children was
already *de facto* guardian of his children. These individuals were pulled in their
obligations and duties between their matrilineal kin and their wives and children.
In fact they differentiated their roles according to the economic and residential
circumstances in which they were involved, though the degree of differentiation
differed from individual to individual.

613 When the fifth generation were in their youth, the *karanavan* of the *tarwad*
593 was 15. According to the Nayar rule the duty of the fostering and educating
175 these members should be performed by 15. However, in actuality among these
182 members, those who had been given a higher education by the *karanavan* were
sons of 13 and 14 (31, 32, 33, 36 and 39), while that of the sons of 12 (25, 27, 28
and 30) was given by their father. The latter's case is indeed the result of the
father's economic ability and his affection towards his children whom he lived
with. Yet this father, on the other hand, made also a considerable economic
contribution to the members of his own *tarwad* as the *karanavan*. Thus such a
man played the two roles of father and *karanavan* at the same time.

613 Such behaviour and contributions created ambivalent psychological
602 inclinations among his descendants through his wife as well as through his sisters.
421 For example, the descendants of 12 who live now partly on property left by
175 12's husband, tend to complain that their grandfather's sisters' daughters who
182 live in the house built by 12's husband, are enjoying property left by their
grandfather. They said that "they are enjoying our grandfather's property," a
situation reasonable from the point of view of the working of the matrilineal
system, since "our grandfather" is "their maternal uncle." Here we see an
interesting fact that they think in terms of the father (grandfather): "the father
(grandfather) is of ours." At the same time, they have a tendency to expect and
depend on the economic help from 32 and 27, who are their matrilineal kin.
In fact 57 after the death of her father, was economically helped by 32 and
(27), which she took for granted. Among these members at the transitional stage,
a confusion of rights and obligations is obvious.

613 In such an unstable situation involving ambivalent elements, what gave
582 them a certain satisfaction or solution was cross-cousin marriage. The marriage
175 of 53, whose wife is his classificatory cross-cousin brought satisfaction to both
182 matrilineal groups (Marayil and Kallamparanbal), because by this marriage
both parties would have a chance to enjoy, and exercise rights on, the property

left by 12's husband for the kingroups of both his wife and his sisters, since both inclined to demand rights on the property left by him to the other party. The marriage of 56 also involved a similar situation for both members of Marayil and Mangayil in order to enjoy the economic activity of 32.

Traditionally the Nayar tended to marry among particular *tarwad* (not necessarily two), between which friendly relationships, expressed in terms of *enanger*, had been established. Hence many marriages fall into the category of the cross-cousin marriage. However, the above cited cases were obviously meant to solve the ambivalent economic situation arising from the disintegrating stage of the *tarwad* system; and so it was explained to me. The present younger generation strongly avoid cross-cousin marriage, as they think it is not good biologically. However, whether they dislike it or not, after the disintegration of the *tarwad* system the cross-cousin marriage itself is losing its social and economic function.

Matrilineal Elements in the Present Nayar Family

In spite of the final partition of the *tarwad* property, and the establishment of elementary family households which made the *tarwad* functionless, the ideology of the *tarwad* (matrilineal system) still persists in various aspects of the life of the present Nayar.

In the new system, in theory, the husband established an independent house for himself and his wife, freed from both his *tarwad* and her *tarwad*, but it is interesting to observe that the house built by the husband is found near to his wife's *tarwad*, unless his job forced him to leave their birth place. The picture is that of a set of households whose wives are sisters, grouped in a certain area. For instance the husbands of 55 and 66 built their houses very near to that of the C group, which was built by the father of 29: these three households are very close to each other, across narrow lanes and a garden. The behaviour of these members was described on page 21.

This might give an impression that women tend to attach to their matrilineal members more than men do. However, men also have very close attachments to their sisters, and are always ready to give moral and economic help to them, in spite of living at a greater distance from them. It was the traditional custom to marry a member of a *tarwad* situated in the same local area, since this was certainly convenient for visiting marriage, and also owing to the inter *tarwad* political relationships. Hence husbands and their sisters easily can visit each other, even after residential separation. Such frequent visits among the members of the matrilineal group maintain great familiarity among them. So far as my own observation goes, a man who has considerable income helps his poorer sisters almost in a same way as he does his wife and children. They themselves say they have often trouble about which they should care for more, wife or sister. They told me, that today they were well aware that they should do their best for their wife and children with whom they live, but they also could not help loving and caring for their sisters and sisters' children very much.

613 This psychological pull towards matrilineal kin also applies to the wives.
593 When they decide an important matter they always ask their maternal uncle's
604 advice, as well as that of their husband. Even the younger generation have great
182 affection for, and a tendency to depend on, the mother's brothers almost in
the same way they do their father. Particularly, if the father dies, it is the mother's
brother who actually takes the responsibility. (See the case of 57.)

613 I think the function of matrilineal elements found in these relations is largely
591 supported by the fact that matrilineal members reside near each other, where
182 they can meet almost every day. Indeed the factors which are vital to the
destruction of matrilineal coherence are created by those members who es-
tablished their life with their wife and children in places geographically distant
from the land of the Nayar, Kerala, such as New Delhi, Bombay or Calcutta,
for example the members of F, K and L in Diagram. In earlier phases of a
marriage, a man who has to reside very far away because of his job, usually leaves
his wife in her mother's house (as the cases of 91, 44 and 50), but when
his job becomes permanent and he has children, usually he takes his wife and
children to his new place. In the course of time, these members tend to have less
and less contact with their matrilineal kin at home, which naturally leads to
social and economic distance from the latter.

Thus the dispersion of members in terms of geographical distance affects
to the actual function of the matrilineal group. In fact I found that the style of
talking about the members of F, K and L sounds considerably different from
that used for the members who reside in the same locality. If geographical
distance is within Kerala, it is a quite different matter from the case of outside
Kerala: for example, a member of a matrilineal group in Ernakulum, resides at
[844] Trivandrum. In such a case, wife certainly comes back to her mother's house for
[796] child birth, and the members come together at important ceremonial occasions
of the matrilineal group. Within Kerala, the land of Nayar, such activities are
taken for granted in the society.

613 A great geographical dispersion of the members results in the decrease of
591 the functional members of the matrilineal group centred on the *tarwad*, but on
602 the other hand, this local matrilineal group would increase its size by peripheral
182 members of non-matrilineal descendants: children of the matrilineal male
members including their wives. These children stand very close to their father's
matrilineal kin, with whom their father keeps frequent contact. The children
feel the matrilineal kin of their father equally important to that of the mother.
When all matrilineal members lived in a *tarwad*, the children were aware of the
tarwad members of their non-resident-father, recognizing them as an important
affinal group (*tarwad*). But I think the degree of familiarity towards these
members greatly differs from that towards the matrilineal kin of the father with
[594] whom they live. Today the actual importance of the father who is the authority
182 in the household, brings his matrilineal kin much closer to his children.

613 It is very interesting, I found, that in all households, the fathers of which
602 were the members of Marayil *tarwad*, an enlarged picture of Prabaty Amma,
353 the foundress of the *tarwad*, was placed at the centre of the guest room. Their

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children regard this picture of Prabaty Amma as that of their ancestress through their father. It appears from this symbol, combined with the frequent visits of their father's sisters and their children, that the father's matrilineal kin are conceptualized as if they were that of the mother. This tendency is greater in the case of the wife and children of 32, which I think largely derives from the fact that 32 is playing the role of the central figure of the Pula Sambantham of his matrilineal group, and that his wife is a member of Mangayil *tarwad*, which is one of the important and close affinal matrilineal groups to Marayil members: the mother's brother and brother of 32's wife also married with members of Marayil 26 and 56.

In spite of the inclination of these children towards their father's matrilineal group, and paternal authority being well established, they still maintain the surname of the male members of their mother's matrilineal group.¹ In Trivandrum the Nayar said to me it depended on the individual free choice whether one should take the father's surname or the mother's brother's: in fact, I found some of them taking their father's surname. However, among the Nayar in Ernakulam, all they are taking mother's brothers' surname and they are proud to do so.

The greater approach of the children to their father's matrilineal group seems to me largely due to their father's important status in his matrilineal group, the members of which live very near to him, combined with his distinguished economic activities, which make him maintain closer contact with his matrilineal kin. For example, if 32 was not the central figure in his matrilineal group, and poor, and on the other hand his wife had a very wealthy uncle to help her now and then, his wife and children might have more attachment to their mother's matrilineal kin, rather than to the father's.

In such a transitional stage, including the earlier stage of the disintegration of the *tarwad* as already discussed, a man has two orientations, to his matrilineal group and to his elementary family. And a man stands balanced between the two groups, differentiating his role according to the circumstances in which he is involved. In this situation to decide a man's behaviour the given law seems less effective than the actual situation in which an individual is involved. 36 who married and once resided in his wife's *tarwad*, later returned to his own *tarwad*, taking the role of a *karanavan* of his old *tarwad*. He said that he felt his need as a guardian for his sister's children, as there was no grown up male member in this *tarwad* building; but he did not mind leaving his wife and grown-up daughters and sons behind. This case should be compared with the case of Nando Pillai who lived his later life with his wife and children, though he was the legal guardian (*karanavan*) of his *tarwad*.

1 Among Nayars, traditionally the surname is used for only male members of a *tarwad*, while female members are called by her maiden name, adding the term "Amma" instead of the surname, after their initiation ceremony. All male members of a *tarwad* share the same surname: for example, the surname of Marayil members is Menon. However, since the same surname is used by many *tarwad* among the Nayars, it does not necessarily indicate common descent lines.

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The observed ambivalent attitudes found in Nayar men during and after the disintegration of the *tarwad* system is very similar to that of many matrilineal peoples, where the system allows the cohabitation of husband and wife. There it is a characteristic feature that a man is placed in an ambivalent situation between the obligations and duties towards his own matrilineal kin and towards his wife and children. From this angle, the present Nayar still live in the matrilineal atmosphere. It is very interesting to speculate where Nayar system will go. How long does it take the Nayar to become free from a matrilineal ideology, the shadow of the *tarwad* life? Many of the present Nayar population have experiences of the *tarwad* life, so the real change might be expected in the next generation. However, even then, it seems to me it would not shift to a patrilineal system, though it could possibly take the patrilineal system with a kind of bilateral arrangement. Whatever it may be, I think the future of the Nayar family and kinship system presents one of the most interesting examples for its study of the effects of historical and economic changes on a kinship system; and how far this kinship ideology can persist.

133 1.9 The distance within which these rivers descend to the sea level being very short, there are generally a large number of steep falls or a series of cascades in their courses. These provide a rich potential for generation of hydro-electric power, which can be generated at a low cost (1.7 nP per kWh on an average). This low cost power potential is an important asset of Kerala from the point of view of the future programmes of industrialization.

133 1.10 Some other implications of topographical features are not so obvious. For example, the lakes, the lagoons and the backwaters fringed with coconut palms, no doubt, impart to Kerala its characteristic scenic beauty and provide one of the chief tourist attractions. Their importance, however, goes much beyond the purely aesthetic aspect. In fact, the backwaters—especially in the Travancore-Cochin region—are indirectly responsible for providing the means of livelihood to a vast section of the population. Coir spinning, the chief industry of Kerala, is located in this State primarily because of the natural retting facilities provided by the backwaters. The availability of these facilities is unique in the case of Kerala. In almost all other coconut-growing areas of India, the coconut husks go waste because of the absence of natural retting facilities. Since coir industry provides an occupation to 4 to 5 lakh persons (about 10% of the total working force and 40% of industrial working force), one can well imagine what the unemployment situation in Kerala would have been in the absence of the backwater facilities. The backwaters have also facilitated the development of a wide network of inland waterways all along the coastline. Apart from employing a large number of persons in towing or rowing the boats, the inland waterways provide inexpensive modes of transporting the agricultural produce and light industrial goods manufactured in the coastal area.

133 1.11 Up till now only some of the favourable consequences of physical features have been pointed out. The sloping terrain and preponderance of backwaters in the coastal area also possess a negative aspect. The heavy downpour is gradually leaching off the mineral content of the soils, thus rendering them generally poor in their fertility status. One of its ultimate consequences is the fact that livestock feed available in Kerala is deficient in mineral content and this in turn reduces the yield of milk of the livestock. The heavy precipitation of rain also creates a serious flood control problem in Kerala.

133 1.12 The backwaters raise other problems as well. During the dry summer months saline water from these flows into the lower reaches of the rivers, many of which fall into the backwaters. This has an adverse effect on cultivation and the supply of drinking water in the coastal areas. Coastal areas are, therefore, beset with the problem of salinity control. The chain of consequences does not stop here. Recently implementation of one of the important salinity control measures in Kerala, viz., the Thanneermukkom bund across the Vembanad lake has created a new problem in its wake. The accretion of limeshell deposits, an important raw material found in the lake, depends on the high salinity of the lake water. Since, after putting up of the barrage salinity of water will get reduced, it will have adverse repercussions on the long run supply position of the limeshells. This, in turn, jeopardizes the long run prospects of the cement industry in the State which is based on the limeshells.

[text continues on p. 6]

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1.13 These, broadly, are the inter-relationship between physical features and economic aspects of the State, and largely determine the nature and structure of the Kerala economy discussed below.

Density of Population

[161] 1.14 In the ultimate analysis, the basic problem of Kerala, viz., an inordinately large section of the population being without any gainful work, is brought about by the very high density of population in the State. With an area only 1.2 per cent of the whole of India, Kerala has to support 3.8 per cent (16.8 million) of the total population of India. The density of population in Kerala (1,125 persons per sq. mile) is naturally over three times the all-India average (384 persons per sq. mile).

1.15 The population, however, is not evenly spread out over the whole of the State, but shows considerable variations from district to district (Table 2). The highland, being mostly covered with forests, is sparsely populated. The average density here is only about 150 persons per square mile. On the other hand, the lowlands bear the severest burden of population. With only about 18 per cent of the State area, they support over 40 per cent of the population. On the other extreme is the coastal strip where the average density is over 2,500 persons per square mile. In certain pockets it even shoots up to 7,000 persons per square mile. The midland, though thickly populated, is not as congested as the area lying in the immediate vicinity of the sea coast.

Growth of Population

1.16 Not only is the density of population high in Kerala, but its rate of growth has also been fairly high. The following table gives the rate of growth of population over the last half century both for India as well as for Kerala.

DECENNIAL PERCENTAGE VARIATION IN POPULATION

Year	India	Kerala
1901-11	3.69	1.75
1911-21	-0.31	9.16
1921-31	11.00	21.85
1931-41	14.23	16.04
1941-51	13.34	22.82
1951-61	21.49	24.53

SOURCE: 1961 Census of Population Provisional Figures.

[165] 1.17 As can be seen, the population has grown much faster in Kerala than in the country as a whole during the last six decades. The basic reason for a faster rate of growth of population in Kerala is a comparatively low death rate while the birth rate is only slightly less than the all-India one. The comparative position of birth and death rates in India and Kerala is given in the following table.

* [see p. 270, category 116 -- Analysis]

(Text continues on p. 8)

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[586] therein laid down, it shall have the incidence of a legal marriage ; that is to say, the wife and children shall be entitled to maintenance by the husband or father, respectively, and to succeed to half his self-acquired property, if he dies intestate ; while the parties to such a sambandham cannot register a second sambandham during its continuance, that is, until it is terminated by death or by a formal application for divorce in the Civil Courts. The total number of sambandhams registered under the Act has, however, been infinitesimal, and the reason for this is, admittedly, the reluctance of the men to fetter their liberty to terminate sambandham at will by such restrictions as the necessity for formal divorce, or to undertake the burdensome responsibility of a legal obligation to maintain their wife and offspring. If, as the evidence recorded by the Malabar Marriage Commission tended to show, 'a marriage law in North Malabar, and throughout the greater part of South Malabar, would merely legalise what is the prevailing custom,' it is hard to see why there has been such a disinclination to lend to that custom the dignity of legal sanction." * The following applications to register sambandhams under the Act were received from 1897 to 1904 :—

—	Nayars.	Tiyans.	Others.	Total.
1897	28	6	2	36
1898	8	2	4	14
1899	8	3	4	14
1900	8	..	9	17
1901	3	..	1	4
1902	...	...	...	...
1903	2	...	...	2
Total ...	57	10	20	87

* Gazetteer of Malabar.

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Tiya Polyandry. The Tiya's living in Malabar, exhibit one especially interesting phenomenon: they are a polyandrous people who are patrilocal (that is, the woman marries and goes to live with her husbands), but also matrilineal (that is, the property that they have—and they do not have much, because they are common laborers—is inherited from the mother's brothers). Unfortunately, I did not have much time to investigate these people because the war broke out when I had only been at work among them for three weeks. Thus, the only thing I could note was that they are polyandrous, patrilocal, and matrilineal at the same time. I should like to return and see how this works out.

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General Conclusions. I am afraid that some of these results may seem superficial. I was unable to stay as long as I should have liked among all these peoples. I did not know any of their languages well, and to really do good field work, one would have to live among them and not put questions to them as I did. However, I hope to return and to do a more thorough study.

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As far as the psychoanalytical results are concerned, I think that they are highly illuminating, though not sufficiently ample to be conclusive. There are strong indications that, broadly speaking, psychic mechanisms, libidinal development and mental structure may be identical to those in the West. There are, thus, numerous instances of trends pointing to Oedipus and castration complexes. What I, however, really investigated insufficiently was where we should place the relative borderline between what is specifically culturally determined in psychology (such as traits due to family environment) and what is generally humanly so (such as sociobiological traits).

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As far as the ethnological results are concerned, these can be examined from two different angles. Functionally, polyandry fulfils the same purpose as all other marriages: it is a social institution for the satisfaction of the individual sexual in-

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distinct and for the orderly social procreation of offspring. Formally, it is more difficult to say why this institution has taken on this curious appearance. As far as I know, authors so far have been rather at a loss to furnish a satisfactory explanation. Many, of course, have been given, with a great amount of variety in their choice.

For instance, we are given historical explanations. In India they say people have been polyandrous for many centuries; that there are indications, such as archaeological (about the Hephthalite Huns, 6th c. A.D.) and literary (the Indian epic poem, the Mahabharata), that the people in this area, both Aryan and non-Aryan, were polyandrous in antiquity. Economic reasons for this have been given; i.e., that the country is poor, that nomadism among Todas or Tibetans, in earlier times, perhaps led to a polyandrous society in order to limit the number of children. Then, demographical explanations have been given, that there is an excess of males over females in this society, and that they have to be polyandrous for that reason. For instance, the Todas practise female infanticide and this is given as a reason for their polyandry. Their men drink a lot of milk, and some people say that the fact that they have more proteins in their diet in this fashion produces more male offspring than female. I do not pretend to know how far this biological explanation is true. Sociological reasons have also been given, namely, that the men travel and have to leave one brother at home with the wife (a reason which I hinted at earlier). In east and south India, the people known as the Nayars, who once could also be called polyandrous, had a very definite military organization (somewhat like that of the Sikhs in the north), and that has been given as a reason why a people is polyandrous: one brother can always remain at home with the wife while the other is away serving with the colors.

It seems to me that these explanations are not sufficient. As far as the historical

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